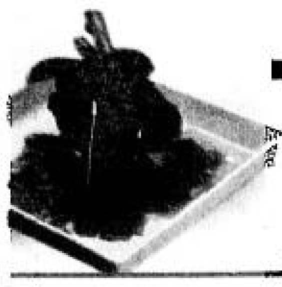

■ **Lifestyle/ C1**

Menu makeover marks Chateau 1771 17th year

■ **News/ A2**

GMA names Ebdane to DPWH; Soriquez out

■ **Across / A17**

Mikey washes hands of quarry scam when he was vice governor

■ **Metro/ A19**

Female public attorney shot dead in Las Piñas

■ **INQUIRER IN-DEPTH**

Ang bagong Binondo: Greenhills, San Juan

Ngayong alas-11 ng gabi, sa ABC

For 1st time in 26 years, Pope misses Ash Wednesday rites

VATICAN CITY—Ailing Pope John Paul II missed out on the Ash Wednesday prayers that ushered in the solemn and sacred Lenten season—a wistful first in his 26-year papacy.

But even though the health of the 84-year-old Pontiff appears to improve since he was rushed to the hospital on Feb. 1 with breathing spasms and the flu, cardinals at the

FOR FIRST TIME/ A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Mikey: Being a presidential son a humiliating experience

By Cynthia D. Balana

AKO ANG NAKIKITA
AKO ANG NASISISI
AKO ANG LAGING MAY KASALANAN

POOR Mikey Arroyo is humiliated being his mother's son.

"Being a presidential son is a humiliating experience. Sometimes I don't

MIKEY/ A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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website: www.inq7.net

Part of Marcos loot spent

'Presidential Valentine's gift has no heart'

By Norman Bordadora and Dona Pazzibuggan

A HEARTLESS Valentine's gift! Government workers yesterday scoffed at Malacañang's announcement of a P1,000 Valentine cash gift from President Macapagal-Arroyo for each of the government's more than 1.4 million employees.

The Confederation for the Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) said the cash gift, in fact, is being sourced from the belt-tightening measures that resulted in additional burden for them.

"This administration is heartless. They even have the gall to say (the cash gift) was from GMA with love when the P1,000 bonus they are talking about would be sourced from the amount the government saved from her belt-tightening measures which hit the employees the hardest," said Courage president Ferdinand Gaite.

It's an affront to government employees, who have been demanding a P3,000 across-the-board salary increase.

PRESIDENTIAL/ A18

CESAR TOMOMBO/CONTRIBUTOR

IF LOOKS could kill, Environment Secretary Mike Defensor would have dropped dead on the Senate floor after three days of intense grilling over his department's budget by Sen. Jamby Madrigal. Sen. Manuel Villar tries to douse the fire in the eyes of the protagonists.

16 solons demand formal inquiry

By Michael Lim Ubac and Cynthia D. Balana

MALACAÑANG had already used a "portion" of the Marcos loot now in the national treasury for land reform, Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

But Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales expressed fears that part of the money was used to finance the election campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2004.

As of Dec. 31, 2004, the forfeited Swiss deposits showed a balance of $467.67 million (P26.19 billion) after P8.8 billion was transferred to the agrarian reform fund in five installments in 2004 (April, May, June, July and October), according to a report submitted by incoming Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima to Senator Arroyo.

Arroyo said Purisima explained to him that the money was used to pay the "current expenses" of agrarian reform.

In the House of Representatives, Rosales said the committee on human rights had received reports that P544 million was used to fund the hybrid rice program called Gintuang Masaganang Ani, P30 million was used for a private oil firm in Quezon, and P541 million was used for irrigation projects in areas with dubious beneficiaries.

"This must be investigated, along with the estimated P22 billion in the accumulated ill-gotten wealth recovered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government from 1986 to 2003," Rosales said.

Before the transfer of funds to agrarian reform, the recovered Marcos Swiss deposits stood at $624.04 million, or some P35 billion, broken down as follows: P81.5 million (cash), P33.5 billion (investment bonds), P53 million (accrued interest) and P1.3 billion (investment in stocks).

Arroyo said Purisima submitted to him Tuesday afternoon a certification showing that the ill-gotten money—previously held in an escrow account with Philippine National Bank—had already been re-

PART/ A6

DUMMIES SQUEALED

No. 2 customs official suspended

By Armand N. Nocum

TRUST not thy dummy.

An official of the Bureau of Customs, who entrusted some of his assets to his relatives and a friend, has been suspended from service for six months after his dummies turned against him.

The dummies confirmed reports about the alleged ill-gotten wealth of Deputy Customs Commissioner Reynaldo S. Nicolas estimated at P48.92 million.

Nicolas was charged with dishonesty, grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service. He will not receive a salary during his suspension.

Nicolas, who placed ninth in the 1983 bar examinations, was found to have not declared most of his properties in his statement of assets and liabilities, which in 2001-2003 stood at a fixed amount of P3,475,000.

Contacted by the INQUIRER, Nicolas expressed "surprise" by

NO. 2/ A7

Opposition in no hurry to impeach President

By Carlito Pablo and Michael Lim Ubac

OPPOSITION congressmen are not rushing to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo. And even if they do so, administration lawmakers said they would not succeed.

In an indication that Ms Arroyo can rest easy for now, House Minority Leader Rep. Francis Escudero said the filing of an impeachment complaint was not in the immediate agenda of the opposition bloc.

"We want to see first a real, clear and certain basis for an impeachment," Escudero said yesterday at a press conference.

He said opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel—who the other day called on the Philippine Constitution Association to initiate the impeachment of the President for allegedly violating the Constitution and betraying the public trust on three counts—had so far not provided the opposition concrete evidence.

"The only basis we have right now is the newspaper article," he said, referring to news accounts of Pimentel's call to Philconsa.

OPPOSITION/ A6

PDI PHOTO

WINDS of change get the better of then DPWH Secretary Florante Soriquez during the ceremonial drive-thru with President Arroyo at the inauguration last Monday of the C-5/Boni Serrano Ave.-Katipunan interchange. *(Story on Page A2.)*

16 penniless Pinoy 'tourists' en route to Dubai held at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

SIXTEEN passengers, among them a cook, a tricycle driver, and a truck driver, bound for Dubai in the United Arab Emirates using tourist visas were barred by the Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force (PAIRTF) from leaving the country on Tuesday afternoon on suspicions that they would be seeking employment in the Middle Eastern country.

"How can you be a tourist in a foreign country when you don't even have money to buy a bus ticket going home. When you're a tourist, you would always have some pocket money with you," PAIRTF-Naia supervisor EdgarCastro asked a 23-year-old tricycle driver.

The driver had appealed to allow him to leave as he had no money to return to his hometown in Pangasinan.

De Castro added that the money most of the "tourist workers" have with them would be the P550 terminal fee.

"They also don't know how much their airplane ticket costs because they claim it was only sent to them by their relatives or friends," Castro said.

One of the passengers, a cook from Anilao, Batangas, interviewed by the INQUIRER said he had been invited by his friends in Abu Dhabi to visit them and that they raised the money for his airline ticket.

"*Wala ako balak maghanap ng trabaho* (I don't intend to look for

16 PENNILESS/ A18

Warplanes pound rebel ranks; 3,000 civilians flee

By PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Some 3,000 people fled their homes in at least six towns of Sulu as sporadic fighting continued yesterday between soldiers and followers of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari.

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong said most of the evacuees fled by foot with children and elderly in tow from clashes in Panamao, Luuk, Parang, Indanan, Panglima Estino and Maimbung towns, and sought refuge in downtown Jolo.

Military planes bombed positions of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) "breakaway" group on Jolo Island and troops attacked rebel bunkers in pitched fighting that has killed 60 people in three days, military officials said.

Army howitzers started shelling at dawn and 3,000 troops staged ground assaults on the island, the bastion of Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Helicopters fired rockets and OV-10 planes dropped 500-lb (227-kg) bombs on rebel fortifications, said Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual.

Abu Sayyaf, a small group linked to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden, and renegades from the MNLF have strongholds in the mountains of Jolo, one of the largest in the string of islands that stretches across the Sulu Sea between Mindanao and Borneo.

The MNLF signed a peace deal with the government in 1996, but some disgruntled members joined the Abu Sayyaf and were involved in several cross-border kidnappings in 2000.

The violence erupted on Monday

WARPLANES/ A18

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

UNIDENTIFIED US military officers called "our consultants" by the Southern Command arrive in Jolo airport on Wednesday as fighting now on its third day continues to rage between an alleged MNLF breakaway group and government forces.

AFP

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Central and Southern Luzon will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with brief rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers mostly over the eastern sections.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/10/05

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Ebdane in, Soriquez out

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday appointed National Security Adviser Hermogenes Ebdane to take over from Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez who is accused of taking kickbacks in government infrastructure projects.

She also ordered the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission to investigate the graft allegations, which Soriquez has denied.

Soriquez, who was returned to his old post of DPWH undersecretary, was sacked just two days after Agusan del Sur Rep. Rodolfo Plaza accused him of allegedly accepting P210 million in kickbacks from district officers.

Two DPWH senior officials earlier accused Soriquez of demanding a 15 percent kickback from district engineers for projects implemented in their areas.

Soriquez said he is willing to answer all the charges and is open to any investigation.

"It's their (subordinates') word against mine, they have to prove it," he told reporters before Ms Arroyo's announcement.

Malacañang stressed that Soriquez's sacking was not connected to Plaza's privilege speech.

"All officials serve at the pleasure of the President with or without any cause. If the President says it's time to go, it's time to go. That's the President's prerogative. That's reason enough to make changes anytime," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a press briefing before the President made the announcement.

Bunye stressed that the DPWH changes was not an indictment of Soriquez.

"We're not prejudging this, this is still up for investigation. Let's see first the recommendation of the PAGC," he said.

EBDANE

Plaza alleged that Soriquez demanded P50,000 in monthly outlays from the DPWH's 173 districts, 15 percent "cash outlay" for government projects, and a 5 percent share from foreign-assisted projects.

Although Ebdane has long been rumored to be in line for the DPWH top post, the President's announcement caught a number of government officials by surprise, including Bunye, who had even defended Soriquez in an early morning radio interview.

"We have to wait for Secretary Soriquez's response because he was asked by the President to answer all accusations point by point," he said.

Bunye said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had informed Soriquez of his return to his old post starting Monday.

Ebdane will be replaced as National Security Adviser by Presidential Chief of Staff Norberto Gonzalez, who held the post last year.

Bunye said the President has yet to choose her next Chief of Staff.

Ebdane's appointment is expected to revive fears of increasing militarization of the Cabinet because of the President's penchant for appointing ex-generals.

But Francis Chua, executive vice president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce, approved of Ebdane's appointment.

"We think he is the right person for the job because of his engineering background. We think he can do a great job in the DPWH as exemplified by his good track record in going after kidnap-for-ransom gangs during his term," Chua said.

At the DPWH main Port Area office, jubilant officials and employees cheered, applauded and flashed victory signs when they heard of Soriquez's relief.

Assistant Secretary Raul Asis, spokesperson of the "Group of 27" key public works officials who petitioned the President to remove Soriquez for alleged weak leadership and insincerity, went around the DPWH office, shaking the hands of the employees. *With a report from Jerome Aning and AFP*

Enrile warns Palace: Don't tamper with statistics

By Michael Lim Ubac

STOP fooling the people.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday cautioned Malacañang against tampering with government statistics and economic and social data to make it appear that the economy has improved.

Enrile said the public had been fed with conflicting statistics and "rosy reports about the economy."

To ensure the integrity of government data, Enrile is pushing for the creation of an independent statistics office.

"The administration should stop fooling the people if it wants more credibility. It should also stop fooling itself so it could present better and more realistic legislative proposals to put our country in the right track," said the senator.

He also slammed the administration for claiming credit for the appreciation of the peso in recent days, saying it had nothing to do with "stronger economic fundamentals" as claimed by Malacañang, but due to the weakening of the US dollar in the world market.

Enrile pointed out that the National Coordination and Statistics Board had reported that the incidence of poverty had been reduced from 27.5 percent of all families in 2000 to only 24.7 percent of all families in 2003.

But the National Statistics Office (NSO) had reported that the average real family income actually fell by 10 percent to only P130,594 in 2003 from P145,121 in 2000, he said.

Enrile explained that the NSO data attributed the declining family income to inflation which eroded the value of the peso.

"Because of inflation, the average family tightened its belt, cutting expenditures on food and other necessities by 8 percent," said the senator.

Ligot's wife bought condo

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE HOUSE committee on national defense yesterday produced documents showing that the wife of a retired three star-general had bought an expensive condominium unit in Metro Manila.

Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez, committee chair, furnished reporters with copies of the letter of Antonio Leachon III, register of deeds in Rizal, and the Condominium Certificate of Title showing that Erlinda Ligot, wife of Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot, owned a condominium unit at the Essensa in The Fort. Its market price as of April 2003 was P20 million.

The documents showed that Erlinda subsequently sold it in August 2003 to Edgardo Yambao, who turned out to be her brother.

At the last committee hearing on corruption in the military, Ligot, a former military comptroller, refused to answer a query from Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte how his wife was able to purchase an expensive condominium unit.

Ligot invoked his right against self-incrimination, saying he was no longer answering questions from the committee about his alleged involvement in corruption.

He did not reply to a comment from a committee member that his wife traveled 25 times with Teresita Reyes, wife of Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, when the latter was still chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and later secretary of national defense.

Golez said he would ask the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate Yambao to determine his financial capacity to buy the condo unit and to find out whether he was acting as a dummy of the Ligot couple.

Ligot's questionable assets included houses at No. 7102 Stanton Avenue in Buena Park, California worth $183,000 and another one worth $10,000 which he purchased in California in 2003.

Based on reports, Ligot's tax declarations also showed he owned a poultry on an eight-hectare property in Bukidnon worth P5 million.

His children, Miguel and Riza, both in their early 20s, were found to have purchased two pieces of property in two barangays in Malaybalay—a five hectare lot in Barangay Kalsungay and a four-hectare property in Sitio Kalatugonan in Barangay Patpat.

Susan Roces: GMA afraid of the truth

ACTRESS Susan Roces, the widow of movie idol Fernando Poe Jr., yesterday accused President Macapagal-Arroyo of being "afraid of the truth" for opposing her bid to substitute for her husband in his election protest at the Presidential Electoral Tribunal.

The President had asked the Supreme Court, sitting as the PET, not to allow Roces to continue with Poe's election protest.

In a reply to the President's petition, Roces asked the high court to dismiss Ms Arroyo's objections and to allow her to substitute for her dead husband.

Roces said Ms Arroyo was a "presumptive President, afraid of the truth, scared of reality, fearful of correct results, uncertain of her claimed victory, hiding behind the wall of procedural niceties."

Her lawyers said that with Roces' reply, the PET would be expected to resolve soon the issue of whether to allow the substitution or to dismiss the protest altogether.

Roces said she was pursuing the election protest so the Filipino people "will know with certainty who was truly voted upon and who was legitimately elected as President of the Republic."

She disputed Ms Arroyo's claim that continuing with the election protest would result in political instability, saying that it was the President's alleged intransigence that placed "the country in limbo ... in a more unstable situation than it already is." *Philip C. Tubeza*

Manalao calls for peace and social harmony during Amon Jadid or Muslim New Year

LANAO del Sur governor Aleem Bashier Manalao has called on the entire Muslim world to work for peace and social harmony among fellow Muslims, Christians and other ethnic and racial groups as the Islamic world celebrated yesterday the start of Amon Jadid, or Muslim New Year.

"In behalf of the constituents of Lanao del Sur, I would like to join hands with all Muslim brothers and sisters worldwide to sow the seeds of peace and social harmony with all our fellow men during the Amon Jadid so that prosperity would blossom in our land," Manalao said.

"Let peace and development live in our midst and may the blessings of our Almighty Allah be upon us all this year," he added.

Manalao's greetings came as the Filipino-Chinese community also celebrated yesterday the start of the Lunar New Year (Year of the Rooster). His message of peace came also at a time when government forces and the Abu Sayyaf group renewed their fighting in the south recently, resulting in heavy casualties to both camps.

Manalao is the 13th governor of Lanao del Sur, a province in north central Mindanao, with a population of about 875,000.

He is the first duly elected vice governor who became governor by succession, following the death of Mamintal Adiong Sr. last year.

As the new chief executive of the province, he has embarked on various economic, health and social welfare programs for his constituents aimed at further improving their living conditions.

The concreting of the provincial roads in the towns of Marantao, Piagapo and Saguiaran were completed under his watch, and so with the concreting of the roads in Bumbaran, Buadi Sacayo, and Pagayawan.

Local residents said the improved road network has significantly increased trade and commerce in their areas, providing better and livelihood opportunities for them.

In his first 100 days in office, Manalao has also instructed his health workers to serve and provide free medicines to thousands of poor outpatients in his province and committed 18,253 families to the provincial health program under the Medicare Para sa Masa.

The governor is now seeking assistance from the national government and foreign development agencies to carry out various projects, including the construction of irrigation facilities, public markets, roads and a water sewerage system for Lanao del Sur.

Manalao, also a preacher and teacher who finished his Islamic studies in Egypt and the Middle East, is known to be moderate and pragmatic Muslim leader with deep concern for women, children and population issues.

NEWSBRIEFS

SC replaces Sandoval

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday replaced Sandiganbayan Justice Edilberto Sandoval as member of the anti-graft court's special division hearing the plunder and perjury cases of former President Joseph Estrada. The high court designated Associate Justice Diosadado Peralta of the anti-graft court's 1st Division as Sandoval's replacement. The tribunal also designated Associate Justice Rodolfo A. Ponferrada as Peralta's alternate. The court's decision to replace Sandoval came after the justice voluntarily inhibited himself from hearing the case on Feb. 3. Sandoval had requested to be relieved from the special division due to his alleged health problems. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Charges vs 8 importers filed

THE BUREAU of Customs yesterday filed criminal charges against eight importers who allegedly smuggled into the country P13.2 million worth of cars, fake DVDs, canned goods and cellular phones. Lawyer Reynaldo Umali, deputy Customs commissioner head of the BoC intelligence and enforcement group, identified those charged as Elson Carpio, Arnold Cuangco, Ronaldo Panganiban, Armando E. Asio, Akram Mohammad Choudry, Edgardo Untalan, Katherine Yu Gabriel, and Renante Sikat. The confiscated goods included a Toyota Lexus, a Toyota Rav4, a Toyota Cruiser, a Nissan Largo, a Nissan Prairie, "Maling" luncheon meat misdeclared as plastic toys, and cell phones misdeclared as electrical materials. *Philip C. Tubeza*

ADB, Sweden mull AIDS fund

SWEDEN and the Asian Development Bank are to establish an HIV/AIDS Trust Fund to help raise regional awareness of the disease, the Swedish ambassador to the Philippines Annika Markovic announced Wednesday. Markovic said the Swedish government has pledged some $14 million to the trust which will be administered by the ADB. Stockholm and the ADB will formally establish the trust at a two-day forum on HIV/AIDS in the Philippines later this month. Markovic said the trust would not only help countries like the Philippines, where the officially recorded incidence of HIV/AIDS is quite low, but other countries in the region. *AFP*

3 NPA rebels killed in Mindanao

THREE communist guerrillas were slain and one was captured in a clash with government forces on the southern Philippines island of Mindanao, a military spokesperson said Wednesday. An Army patrol clashed with 10 New People's Army (NPA) members near the town of Kiblawan on Tuesday, resulting in the killing of three rebels and the wounding and capture of another, military spokesperson Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual said. Fourteen other NPA rebels and two soldiers were slain in another clash in Mindanao over the weekend. *AFP*

BI detains 4 Vietnamese

THE BUREAU of Immigration yesterday barred four Vietnamese refugees from leaving the country for allegedly using fake Philippine passports. BI chief Alipio Fernandez Jr. said three were arrested while the fourth managed to escape while being brought to the Naia 2 immigration office for investigation. A boy, who was one of those apprehended, was turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The boy's mother, Le Thi Ngan, and her companion Le Nguyen Anh Tai were both detained at the BI jail in Bicutan, Taguig City. Seized from them were tampered Philippine passports. *Jerome Aning*

Senate OKs '05 budget of DENR

By Christine O. Avendano

THE SENATE finally approved yesterday the 2005 spending package of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources after three days of intense deliberation and grilling by Sen. Jamby Madrigal of its Secretary, Michael Defensor.

Deliberation on the DENR budget was unusually long compared to other departments, and there was perception that it had something to do with the ongoing tiff between Madrigal and Defensor.

Madrigal last month filed a libel suit against Defensor for linking her family to mining and logging operations in Quezon and Aurora, provinces hardest hit by last year's deadly floods largely blamed on illegal logging.

"Personal animosity is standing in the way of the speedy approval of the budget," lamented the senator, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The same source said other senators had been appealing to Madrigal to wind up her interpellation on the DENR budget, which had been on the floor since Monday. There were four or five more government agencies whose budgets were still up for discussion as of press time.

Late in the afternoon yesterday, Madrigal was still on the floor questioning the P5.1-billion budget proposal of the DENR which Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., chair of the Senate finance committee, was defending.

Madrigal did not only tell Villar that she would be asking 200 questions on the department's proposal, but also castigated Defensor for issuing negative statements against her in the media.

Later on, DENR's budget passed the Senate scrutiny, paving the way for the discussion of the spending package of other government agencies. *With a report from Mike Lim Ubac*

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DOCS TOP LIST

Thousands of rich Pinoys not paying taxes, says prof

TENS of thousands of the Philippines' richest citizens are paying little or no income tax, helping to erode the government's finances and promoting a culture of cheating, a tax expert said yesterday.

This group comprises the top 5 percent economic bracket who earn money through businesses or are self-employed, said tax professor Victor Abola of the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Abola singled out doctors as the prime culprits.

International credit rating agency Standard and Poor's last month downgraded the Philippines' sovereign credit ratings by a notch, citing the government's failure to shore up its public finances.

Government revenues as a percentage of gross domestic product stood at an estimated 14.1 percent in 2004, among the lowest in Asia.

"Income tax rates for the self-employed really need urgent reform. That's where there are really big leakages," Abola said at a news conference.

He said income tax payments accounted for about 18 percent of the government's total tax revenues. But people on salaries shouldered a disproportionately higher load with an effective tax rate of 26.66 percent, even though most earned less than people with a business income.

Abola said salaried workers paid P76 billion in income taxes in 2003 compared to just P7 billion paid by people with business incomes. The two groups used to pay about the same amount, he added.

High earners either failed to pay taxes or used legal means to reduce their tax burden, he said. The wealthy have long complained that taxes would end up lining the pockets of corrupt politicians and officials.

"That's a lame excuse. You have to first fulfill your duty—and then you can complain," Abola said. "I think we have too many complainers here and too few honest taxpayers." *AFP*

RP, Japan hold talks on defense cooperation

JAPAN and the Philippines held their first talks on possible defense cooperation with an emphasis on counterterrorism, a senior military official said yesterday.

A six-member delegation from Japan's foreign ministry and Defense Agency arrived late Tuesday and will hold talks until Thursday with their Philippine counterparts, said Armed Forces Deputy Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan.

"For the first time, talks are ongoing between the government of the Republic of the Philippines and the government of Japan with the objective of looking at possibly enhancing the cooperation between the (armed forces) and the Department of National Defense," Adan told reporters.

"We are still going to look at the areas of cooperation that will possibly be enhanced—areas of disaster management and relief (and) how to cooperate in the war against terrorism," he added.

"We are only discussing what areas we can cooperate," he said, adding that "preliminary talks are still ongoing. We cannot give further information at this time."

He would not elaborate on what form this defense cooperation could take.

So, would there be joint military exercises between the Philippine armed forces and the Japanese army any time in the future?

"It has not reached that point yet. This is the first time our governments are talking and we cannot talk about this," Adan said.

The Japanese delegation is headed by Shinichi Nishimiya, deputy director general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau at the foreign ministry.

The Philippines, then a US commonwealth, was brutally occupied by Japanese forces during World War II. Japan is now the largest source of official assistance to the country. *Reports from AFP and Alcuin Papa*

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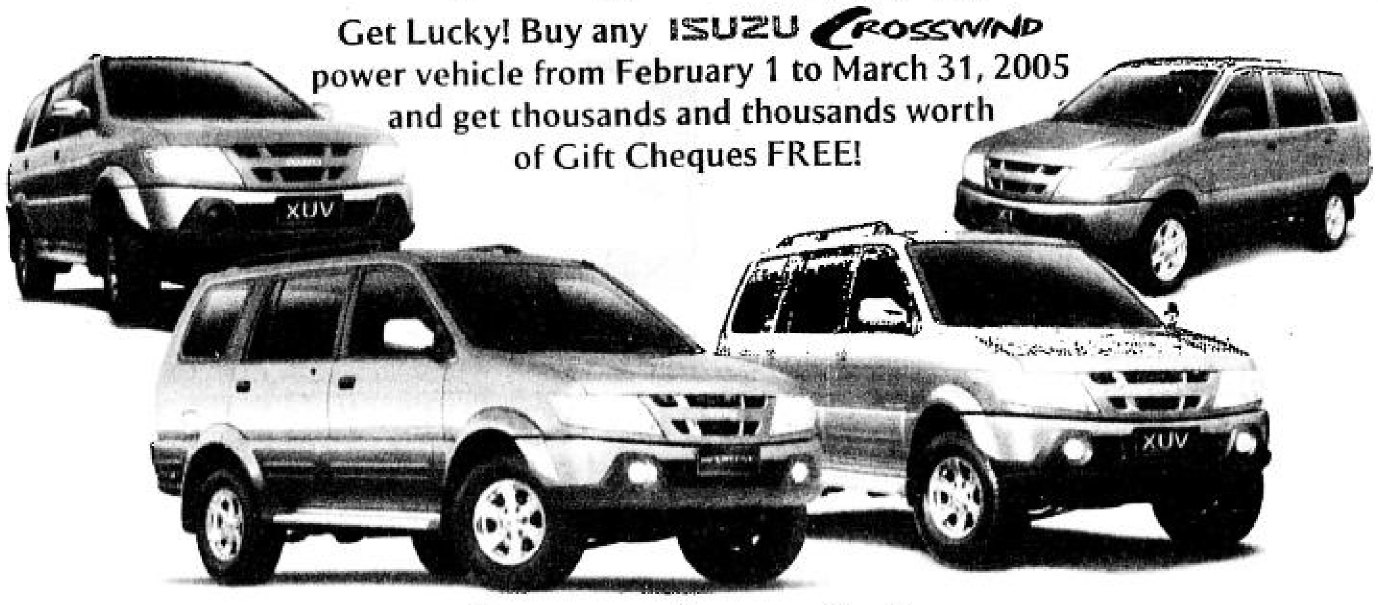

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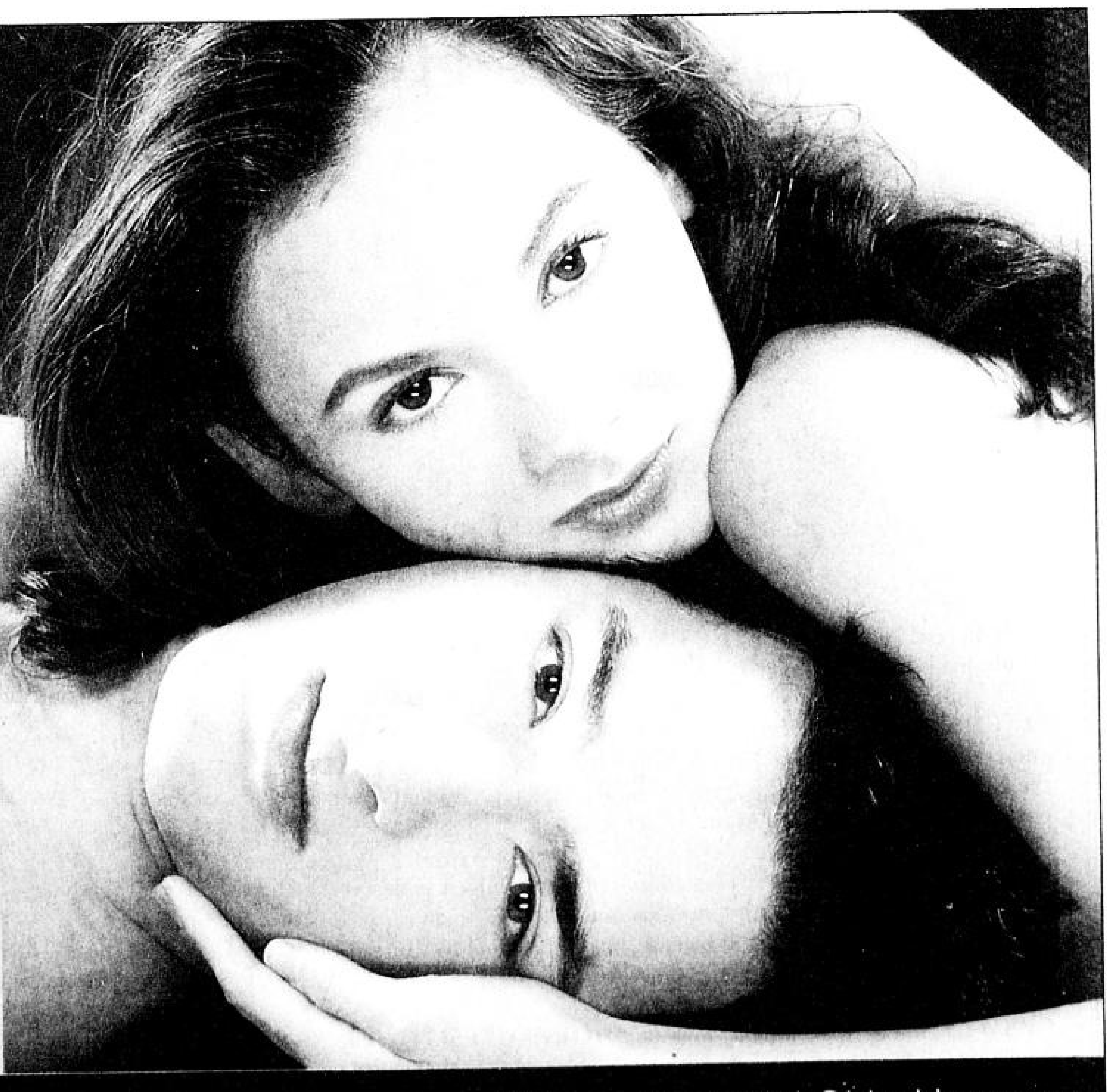

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You'll take exams, CAP assures studes

Tell plan holders real score, pre-need firm dared

By Luige A. del Puerto

THOUSANDS of student plan holders of the cash-strapped College Assurance Plan are assured of taking their final examinations this semester at least, a CAP official said yesterday.

Some 90,000 holders of the CAP's education plans are currently enrolled in colleges and universities nationwide.

CAP spokesperson Bobby Cafe said the pre-need firm was doing two things to ensure that students are able to take the final exam this semester amid reports that CAP has been having problems paying for the tuition of its policy holders.

"One is by cash payments, and two by negotiations with the schools. (Our) assurance is that they would be able to take the final exam," Cafe said at the weekly Ciudad Fernandina press forum.

"We have already (applied for a) loan. The memorandum of agreement has been executed, including the loan agreement with First American Investments," he said.

CAP, the country's biggest preneed firm, is reported to have incurred a trust fund deficiency of P17.2 billion, putting into serious doubt its ability to meet the future needs of some 780,000 education plan holders.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has since suspended CAP's dealer's license, stopping it from selling any more plans to the public, further putting the firm's finances in jeopardy.

To put its financial house in order, CAP plans to borrow $300 million from the Nevada-based FAI.

It also plans to improve its capital adequacy requirement by proposing to swap shares for a 2,900-hectare property of the Green Circle and Green Square property firms owned by lawyer Romeo Roxas.

Cafe claimed that CAP had been informed by the SEC that it was "[interposing] no objections" to CAP's loan contract agreement with FAI.

The first transfer, which could take place by the end of February or early March, amounts to about $80 million, Cafe said.

"In case there are delays, we have negotiations now to convert some of trust fund assets into cash," he said.

CAP's trust fund, the money that it is required by law to set aside to manage and grow to meet future obligations to plan holders, stood at P8.8 billion, Cafe said.

Of the P1.6 billion in checks that CAP issued since the first semester up to December 2004, only P48 million remained unfunded, he said.

Cafe said CAP was also eyeing two to three other loans and sale of assets to raise enough money to meet its obligations.

But if the money raised would not be enough, he said CAP was already making arrangements with universities and colleges so its student plan holders would be allowed to take the final exams.

During the forum, Consumer and Oil Price Watch chair Raul Concepcion said CAP should tell its plan holders what the real financial situation of the company is.

"Public information, disclosure and transparency is the first bible that I think you should do from day one," Concepcion told Cafe.

Concepcion also wanted to find out how the trustee banks which manages the CAP's trust fund had invested the money.

Concepcion said the investments should have been "conservative."

He said he would have the banks subpoenaed by the Senate which is conducting an investigation into the finances of CAP.

Concepcion wanted to know why CAP funds were invested in the Metro Rail Transit and Camp John Hay at "huge prices." MRT and Camp John Hay are sister companies of CAP to which a big chunk of CAP money was invested.

"(What's) coming out is that investments were made and as a result, the poor plan holder is paying," he said.

NLEx starts full operations today; toll rates up

THE NEW North Luzon Expressway was set to start full operations late yesterday under the Manila North Tollways Corp., which took over the management of the modernized highway from the state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp.

MNTC president Jose P. de Jesus said the opening of the NLEx would fuel the development of Central and Northern Luzon as it would increase trade and commerce, accelerate investments and spur the development of new industries.

A MNTC press statement described the 84-km expressway as containing "state-of-the-art equipment and world-class facilities never before seen in any local toll way."

These include 138 new lanes to make a total of 433 lanes, four new interchanges, 10 upgraded interchanges and a new flyover in Novaliches, 26 widened exits, four toll plazas and resurfaced roads.

But the world-class features also carry a high price tag.

Motorists using the facility will be paying rates that are 500 percent more than current fees, after the Tollway Regulatory Board approved the other day a 380-percent toll adjustment sought by the MNTC.

Class 1 vehicles will be charged P2.48 per km compared to the current P0.52 per km.

MNTC assistant vice president Marlene Ochoa said the benefits and savings from using the expressway would outweigh the increase in toll rates.

The MNTC cited a study by the UP Planning and Development Research Foundation (UP Planades) which said that even with the higher toll rates, motorists would enjoy savings of up to P7.44 per km because of reduced vehicle operating costs.

The Tollways Management Corp. promises efficient toll service with a collection system in which transaction time would last only eight seconds per vehicle.

Its operations and maintenance center will be using more than 20 cameras to monitor 84-km stretch of highway 24 hours a day.

The TMC can provide immediate response—within 20 minutes—to any incident, whether mechanical or medical, with its 18 patrol vehicles, nine motorcycle patrols, two ambulances from Lifeline Arrows, and three tow trucks from the Automotive Association of the Philippines on standby, said TMC president Anthony Mabasa.

The new NLEx is a joint venture of the Lopez Group's First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp., the PNCC, the France-based Egis of France, and Leighton Asia of Australia.

AFP reviews award of Medal for Valor to Buan

By Alcuin Papa

BUAN

THE MEDAL for Valor awarded by the military to former New People's Army captive Lt. Col. Noel Buan is now under review.

Allegations that procedures were not properly observed during the deliberation prompted the review of the award, the highest given by the military for gallantry in combat, according to Armed Forces spokesperson Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan yesterday.

Buan received the Medal for Valor from President Macapagal-Arroyo in December 2004.

Adan declined to discuss the details of the complaints by some quarters in the military, saying these would be the subject of discussion when a high-level committed created by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu convenes. He also refused to identify the groups protesting the award.

"There are allegations that it was not done properly so the committee will look into that and give a report to the CS (chief of staff)," Adan said.

When reminded by reporters that it was Ms Arroyo herself who awarded the medal to Buan, Adan said: "General Abu has given instruction to investigate if what others are saying are true, that the procedure was not followed. There is nothing wrong with that so there will be no more questions."

A board of officers led by the AFP vice chief of staff and other senior military officials meet and deliberate on the awardees. Recipients of the Medal for Valor are given a P20,000 cash bonus a month on top of their monthly salary and priority in promotions.

The awardees and their descendants are also given priority in applications for employment in government offices and enrollment in state colleges and universities. They are also given free medical and dental services in all government hospitals.

A member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1984, Buan rose to fame when he was captured by the New People's Army in 1999, when he was then the intelligence officer of the Southern Command, while hunting down communist rebels in Southern Tagalog. He was released a year later by his NPA captors in Mindoro following a series of negotiations.

In April of 2003, Buan led the 1st Scout Ranger Battalion in a clash against the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan that resulted in the death of ASG leader Hamsiraji Sali and six other extremists.

According to his citation, he "personally planned and led" the assault. The citation also said that Buan, despite being wounded, "was able to direct and control the rest of his men in the firefight and (enemy) withdrawal."

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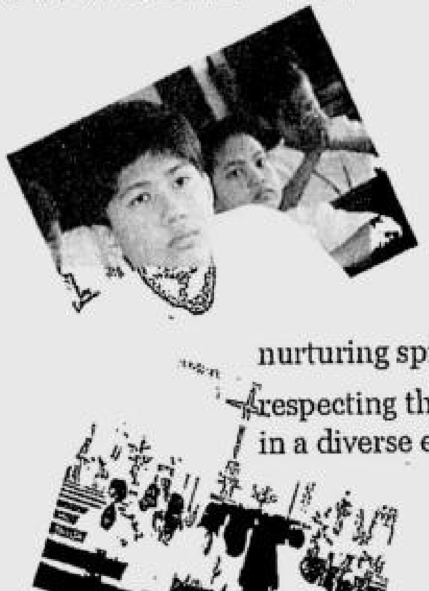
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CENTEX, currently a public elementary education given to deserving children, is ably supported by the Ayala Foundation which gives the students free tuition fee, school supplies, uniform and a feeding program. Now that the first batch of CENTEX elementary students will be graduating by March, 2005, said students will be entering high school by June of this year. College of the Holy Spirit of Manila has been CHOSEN to educate the CENTEX scholars for their high school studies.

CHSM-CENTEX at Mendiola, Manila is NOT EXCLUSIVE to the CENTEX scholars. It also accepts other interested and qualified high school applicants (boys and girls). Interested applicants are requested to visit the CHSM Guidance Center to register for the examination and submit all admissions requirements one week before the date of the examination.

For more information, please write or call: guidance@chsmanila.edu.ph; 7356021 / 7355981 / 7355983

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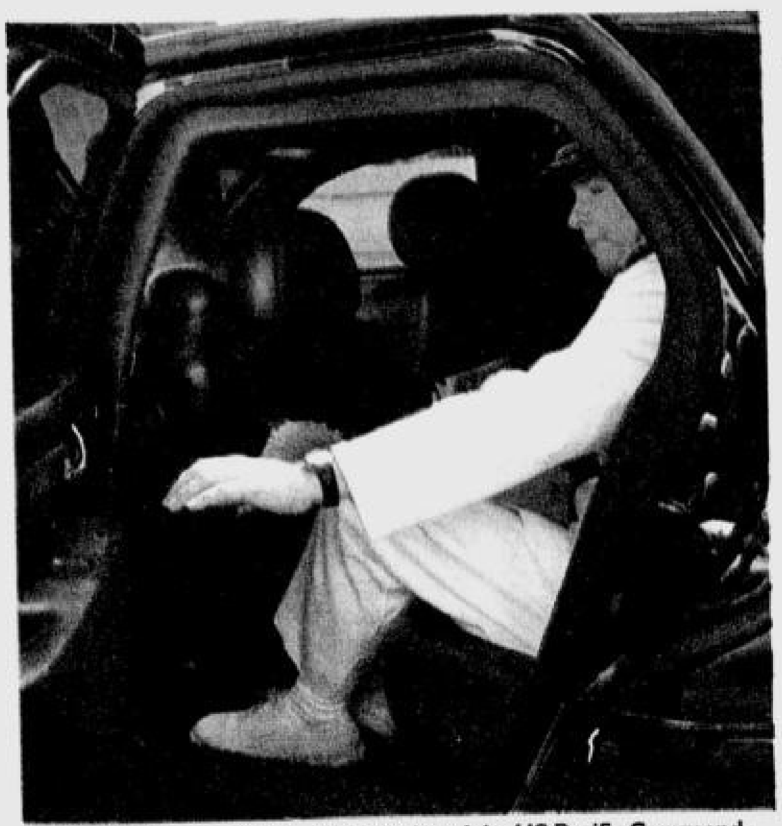

ADMIRAL Thomas Fargo, commander of the US Pacific Command, boards car following his visit to Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City Wednesday.

JOAN BONDOC

US admiral lauds RP moves on terror

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE SENIOR commander of all United States forces in the Pacific and Indian Ocean yesterday affirmed continuing US commitment to help the Philippines upgrade its military capability and combat terrorism, including the presence of the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah in Mindanao.

"I think the JI is the principal concern in the region and we're working very closely with the government of the Philippines to make sure that the JI is not present in the Philippines," Admiral Thomas Boulton Fargo, commander of the US Pacific Command, told reporters after his farewell call on President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday morning.

Fargo is ending his tour of duty as senior commander of the US military, air, ground and naval forces in the Pacific and Indian Ocean region, which accounts for more than 50 percent of the earth's surface, includes 16 time zones and borders 43 countries inhabited by more than 60 percent of the world's population.

As commander since May 2002, Fargo's responsibilities included oversight of all US military activities promoting peace and stability in the region, according to a statement from the US embassy.

For his impact on the Philippines, Fargo was conferred by the President the Philippine Legion of Honor, a military award given to a Filipino or foreign citizen in recognition of valuable and meritorious service in relation to the military affairs of the country.

Ms Arroyo hailed Fargo's role in "changing the face of Basilan," the playground of extremists linked to the JI and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network. US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone accompanied Fargo to the farewell call and awarding ceremonies.

"The partnership between our two countries under your command has really produced a lot of fruits and we appreciate the assistance of the regional command in various peace fronts and also our cooperation on our greater effort and success in the fight against terrorism," Ms Arroyo told Fargo in a 20-minute meeting before she pinned the Philippine Legion of Honor medal on him.

Fargo said Ms Arroyo's "excellent job" in formulating the Philippine Defense Reform Program had the full backing of Washington.

"I just had extensive discussions in Washington DC on it. I think it is a very well-formulated program that is properly funded and it's going to have a positive impact on the reform of the Philippine military," Fargo told the President, repeating the same to reporters.

Fargo said he was "deeply honored" by the award.

The US embassy statement said discussions between the President and Fargo centered on RP-US military-to-military security cooperation activities, including the Philippine Defense Reform Program, and enhancing sustained capacity to counter terrorism.

Asked what Ms Arroyo's message to US President George W. Bush was, Fargo said: "The President said first of all that she was very appreciative of the support that the US has provided. As you know, we do have a long-standing relationship. We work closely to improve the capability and the capacity of the AFP."

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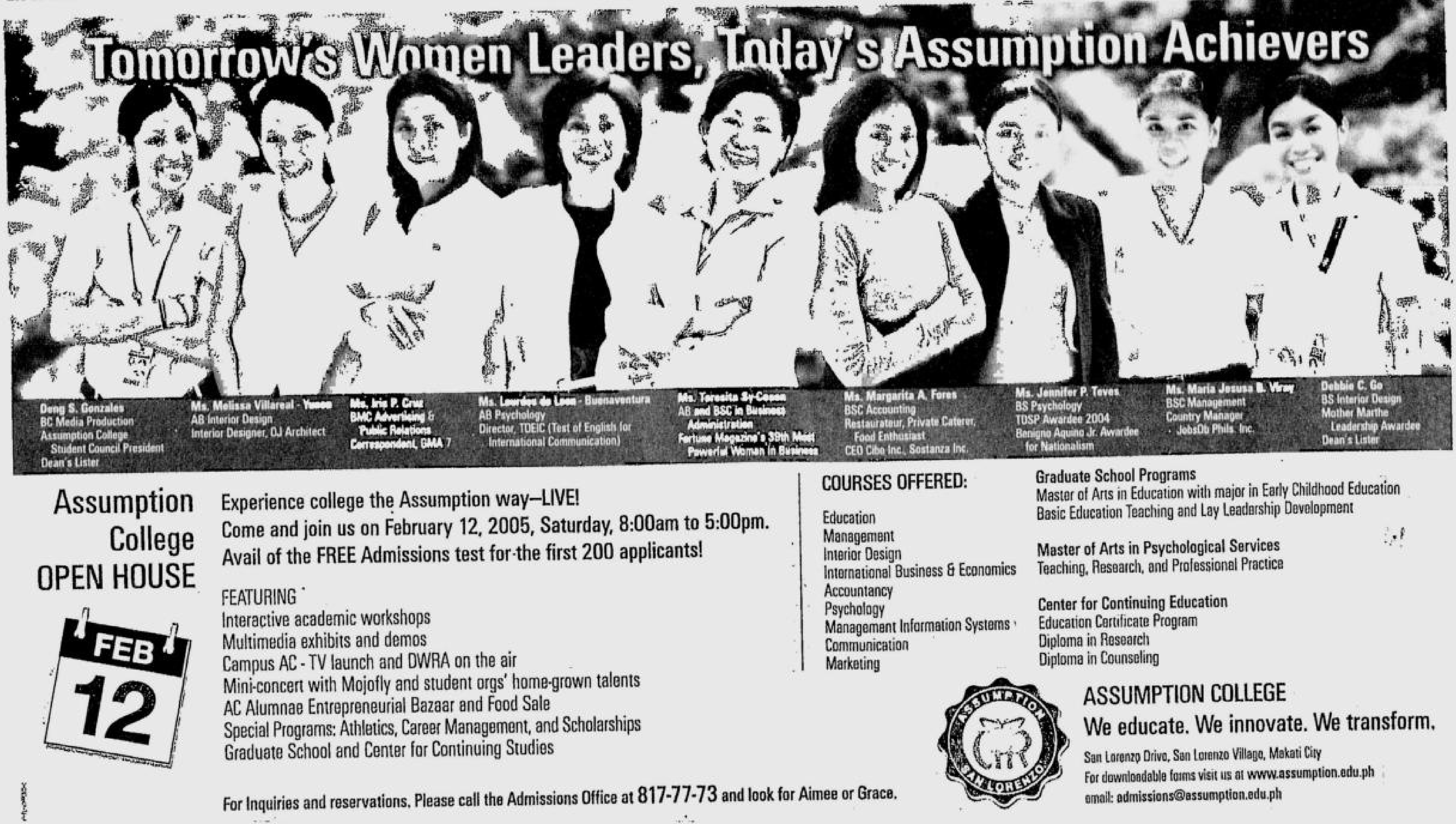

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Part of Marcos loot spent

From page A1

mitted to the Bureau of Treasury.

"Some monies were already taken away because monies recalled for ill-gotten wealth is earmarked for the agrarian reform program. Certain monies were taken in pursuance of that mandate but generally it is safe," Arroyo said at a press conference.

Arroyo, however, assured victims of human rights during martial law that they would be compensated.

"This is (Purisima's) report to the Senate. We can assure the human rights victims that there is money for us. Secretary Purisima and I met yesterday and he showed me the figures of the old Marcos deposits and the $200 million for the human rights victims is intact," the senator said.

Senators Arroyo, Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sergio Osmeña III were imprisoned by Ferdinand Marcos, but refused to ask any compensation.

House probe

Sixteen members of the House, some of them victims of human rights violations during the Marcos regime, yesterday called for an inquiry into the status of the $683 million in Marcos Swiss deposits that had been deposited in an escrow account in PNB.

They were Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Liza Maza of Gabriela, Crispin Beltran and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, Teofisto Guingona III of Bukidnon, Abraham Kahlil Mitra of Palawan, Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III and Rafael Nantes of Quezon, Roseller Barinaga of Zamboanga del Norte, Del de Guzman of Marikina, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III of Tarlac, Eduardo Zialcita of Parañaque, Edcel Lagman of Albay and Eulogio Magsaysay of the party-list AVE.

In House Resolution No. 275, they asked the House committee on banks and financial intermediaries chaired by Manila Rep. Jaime Lopez and the House committee on human rights headed by Rosales to locate the recovered money.

Money trail

In 1998, the Marcos assets were transferred from Swiss banks to PNB. In July 2003, the Supreme Court forfeited the money in favor of the government after it had ruled that it was ill-gotten.

In March 2004, the Department of Agrarian Reform announced that $624 million of the amount was already with the Bureau of Treasury and was to be used for land reform.

Singapore bank

On Tuesday, however, PNB president Lorenzo Tan said the money was handed to the national treasury except for $25 million still stuck with West LB Singapore. About $30 million to $35 million is in a retention fund.

Mariano said it was the first time for him to hear that some of the money was still in Singapore.

He said people must know the status of the Marcos money to prevent unauthorized disbursements and releases.

Mariano asked the President on Tuesday to show proof that the $683 million forfeited to the government was still intact and was not used in her election campaign.

In HR 275, the authors said there was a need to know what exactly was the "separate special account in the general fund" under which the forfeited funds had been entered and recorded.

DBM to give accounting

They also asked the Bureau of Treasury, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and other concerned government agencies and banks to render a full report and accounting of the funds.

In Malacañang, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye could not give a detailed accounting of the $683 million in Marcos ill-gotten wealth.

"The money is there (and while the funds are) for the benefit of the farmers, the President is amenable to have part of this money earmarked for the compensation of human rights victims," he said at a press briefing.

But Bunye said he was not in a position to give a detailed accounting of the $683 million that was forfeited in favor of the government.

He said the Department of Budget and Management could make the explanation.

In a statement, Bunye reminded critics that the bulk of the money would go to agrarian reform as provided for in the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.

"The human rights victims will get their fair share. But it must be emphasized that the bulk of the proceeds will go to the land reform program," he said.

How was it spent?

"This will have an important role in pushing forward the gains we have already been posting in agriculture, as well as in the overall growth of the economy, which will draw in more investments to create jobs for our people," Bunye said.

Bunye earlier confirmed that the President had set aside $200 million from the amount for the compensation of claimants pending amendment of the CARL.

"I believe her that a certain portion would be saved for the victims," Rosales said.

"But what happened to the one that went to the agrarian reform. How was it spent?"

Technically, the government can spend the money for land reform because that is provided by law, Rosales said.

"This is around P28 billion. It should go to land acquisition and land distribution," she said, and not to support services like the building of irrigation systems. The latter, according to Rosales, is the function of the Department of Agriculture.

Hallucinating

Rosales also chided Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. for saying that the compensation of human rights victims was a responsibility of the government, not the Marcos estate.

"Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is hallucinating when he says that he does not form part of the burden for the excesses and brutality of his father's regime," Rosales said.

Marcos estate liable

"He needs to be reminded of the plain fact that the Hawaii District Court that issued a ruling back in 1989 in favor of the victims had stated that the estate of the late dictator was liable for providing compensation to the plaintiffs," she said.

Beltran said the young Marcos must be suffering from premature senility.

With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana and Luige A. del Puerto

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Opposition in no hurry to impeach GMA

From page A1

"We do not want to rush the filing of a complaint because if it turns out to be weak and it gets dismissed, there is a one-year ban against filing a new one."

Speaker Jose de Venecia was quick to strike down the call for impeachment: "Even on the grounds of merit, such a move being contemplated will not prosper."

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles agreed with De Venecia, saying Pimentel's call was "all hot air."

"Senator Pimentel is a brilliant lawyer and he, I'm sure, knows very well that his impeachment call does not have any legal ground," Nograles said, adding:

"It won't fly. But it will erase whatever economic gains we have had so far."

Prove it

Deputy Majority Leader Rep. Eduardo Gullas said the opposition should first prove that the alleged infractions of the President were "culpable violations of the Constitution meriting an impeachment."

"We've seen none, and we don't expect to see any," he said.

Palawan Rep. Antonio Alvarez said simply: "No congressman will be agitated into endorsing an impeachment complaint against President Arroyo."

By law, any impeachment complaint starts at the House of Representatives. The Senate serves as a tribunal once the complaint is submitted to it for hearing.

An impeachable official cannot be the subject of two impeachment complaints within one year.

The House can uphold the validity in form and substance of an impeachment complaint, or dismiss it through a one-third vote of all members.

Not a good time

Senate President Franklin Drilon said that he disagreed with his "esteemed colleague," and that this was not a good time for the nation to undergo yet another impeachment trial.

"It will only divide the Filipino people and unnecessarily derail our bipartisan efforts toward putting our fiscal house in order to achieve national economic recovery," he said in a statement.

He also expressed confidence that Malacañang would be able to answer Pimentel's charges against the President.

He said "not every alleged error is an impeachable offense."

In his own statement, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan essentially made the same observation.

"Assuming the acts cited by Senator Pimentel violate our laws, not all acts of the President, although contrary to the law or the Constitution, are impeachable acts," Pangilinan said.

Corrective measures

But Drilon told reporters that Ms Arroyo should take corrective measures regarding two of Pimentel's three accusations—her alleged excess appointments of officials to the government and the Coast Guard's supposed purchase of rescue vessels without authority from Congress.

The third accusation is the President's alleged use of the trust funds raised through the road users' tax and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration for her election campaign.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. also expressed doubt that any impeachment case filed against Ms Arroyo based on Pimentel's charges would prosper.

But he said this was because there were more administration than opposition lawmakers in the House.

Corresponding move

Pimentel, however, told the INQUIRER that the minority in the House was sympathetic to his call for impeachment.

"Some friends in the House have a corresponding move there also," he said. But he did not elaborate.

A Philconsa member, who asked not to be named, said the association would hold a special meeting on Monday "to discuss calls for impeachment."

According to the Philconsa member, "on the surface" Ms Arroyo has violated the Constitution.

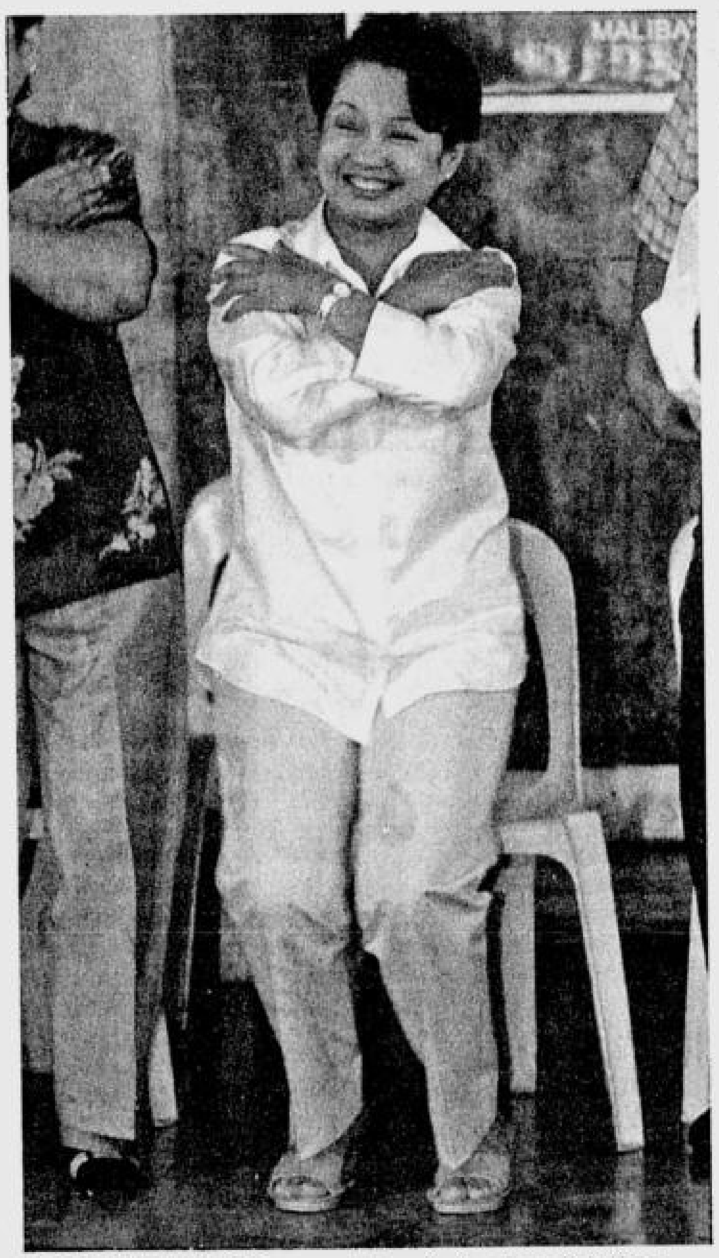
Pimentel warned of Malacañang moves to "kill" any impeachment complaint.

"A high official of the administration in the House is trying to squelch any attempt [at impeachment]," he said without naming names.

Referring to the separate statements issued by Drilon and Pangilinan criticizing his call to Philconsa, he said these were "part of Palace efforts to downplay the possible repercussions of the speech" he had delivered.

Very delicate

Opposition Senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Jinggoy Estrada, although sympathetic to Pimentel's call, said they could not make conclusions as yet.



PRESIDENT ARROYO seems to be enjoying herself during a visit to a micro-finance project of the National Anti-Poverty Commission in Zone 9, Maricaban, Pasay City. VAL HANDUMON

"I do not know how I will react to [his speech]," Enrile said. "Impeachment is very delicate so I better read it first before making any comment. We in the Senate cannot make an advance opinion because ... we might be accused of having prejudged [an issue]."

But Enrile said he had "enough faith" in Pimentel's legal acumen.

Estrada, eldest son of ousted President Joseph Estrada whose aborted impeachment trial triggered Edsa II in January 2001, said it was too early to tell whether Ms Arroyo would suffer the same fate as his father.

He said the reasons cited by Pimentel could be grounds for impeachment, "but I will study them first."

But he backed Pimentel's move to call the people's attention to Ms Arroyo's alleged excesses.

'Take the challenge'

While lawmakers are not yet jumping on the impeachment bandwagon, militant groups Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and Pamalakaya called on Philconsa to heed Pimentel's call.

"Take the challenge," said Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap. "That's the only way you can show to the people that you exist to defend the Charter from corrupt leaders and criminal minds."

Last year, the KMP and Pamalakaya filed a plunder complaint before the Office of the Ombudsman against Ms Arroyo and other government officials for the alleged use of P728 million in agricultural funds to beef up her campaign kitty. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Cynthia D. Balana and Norman Bordadora*

GMA unfazed by impeachment call

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE CALL for her impeachment did not dampen the mood of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who yesterday joined members of an evangelical lending group in Pasay City in dancing to upbeat Christian music.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo was hardly affected by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's call to the Philippine Constitution Association on Tuesday to file an impeachment case against her, for allegedly using government money to fund her election campaign.

Doubt on Pimentel

Bunye also raised doubt on Pimentel's intent to unseat the President, for whom he held a microphone during her oath-taking after Edsa II.

"We are not even sure if he is very serious in filing the case. This move is not timely. We all know that Congress is busy with fiscal reform measures, and this will distract the agenda of our legislature," Bunye told reporters.

In an interview with RMN radio, Bunye said: "I think Senator Pimentel is just interested in headline-grabbing. If he is really serious, he should file the case and we will answer him."

Ms Arroyo was all smiles when she met with the 30 active women partners of the Center for Community Transformation (CCT) in its Malibay branch in Pasay.

Financial support

She joined members of the CCT—which provides microfinancing to women in urban poor communities using its own funds and financial support from the state-owned People's Credit Finance Corp.—during the song-and-dance numbers at the opening and close of the program.

Bunye said the President maintained the cheery disposition throughout an hour-and-a-half-long meeting in Malacañang after the Pasay event, after which she went to the nearby St. Joseph chapel for the Ash Wednesday Mass.

Mikey: Being a presidential son a humiliating experience

From page A1

enjoy being a presidential son. It's a clear disadvantage," the eldest of President Macapagal-Arroyo's brood of three said yesterday.

The neophyte lawmaker, a representative of Pampanga, expressed annoyance over an INQUIRER report yesterday quoting a source as saying that more than 30 members of the Presidential Security Group were deployed to the Centennial Airport on Monday to meet him and his family as they arrived from Hong Kong.

"This is too much," he told the INQUIRER. "They can't find fault in me; that's why they have to fabricate lies in order to hit my mother."

Arroyo said that as a member of the First Family, he had only three PSG escorts—the same escorts providing him security as a congressman.

He said these same security escorts met him on his arrival from Hong Kong, where he spent a vacation with his wife and child as well as his father, Juan Miguel Arroyo, and uncle, Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo.

Upon learning that his father was arriving with him, the airport management decided to augment the security escorts, Arroyo said.

"[But] it's the airport security, the back security, and that's already beyond my control. Why fault me for that?" he said, adding:

"Like if I attend a birthday party with two or three friends, should I be responsible for the presence of, say, 300 other guests who are there? That's not fair."

Only 8

In another interview, Arroyo said his critics should learn how to count.

"Matuto naman silang magbilang," he told the PDI Central Luzon Desk before the start of the House hearing yesterday on the Pampanga quarry revenues.

He said only eight men, some of them not members of the PSG, provided security when he, his wife Angela, and their daughter Mikaela Gloria arrived at the airport.

Arroyo said those assigned to secure him were "usually two or three but not eight or 30 or more."

Asked why, at that instance, he had eight security men, he said in Filipino: "When I'm invited [to any function] or when owners of establishments that I visit learn that I'm around, they usually send additional security [men]. But I do not ask for these."

Not exclusive

Coming to Arroyo's defense, Angel Atutubo, assistant general manager for security and emergency at the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), said the 30 PSG men seen on Monday were "not exclusive" to the congressman.

Security for Mike A.

Atutubo said the number was that big because the President's husband was also supposed to be there. Each member of the First Family, including the daughters-in-law, has his/her own security escorts.

"Nagkasabay-sabay ang security (Their security details were all there at the same time)," the retired general said, reiterating what he said when he was first sought for comment on the number of PSG men deployed to meet the Pampanga lawmaker.

Atutubo confirmed that the security detail of the President's husband arrived at the airport even if he himself did not make it.

Citing security reasons, he declined to specify the exact number of PSG men detailed to members of the First Family when they go to the airport.

Liaison officers

He said there were also a few PSG men acting as liaison officers between the elite unit and the airport security whenever a member of the First Family would leave or arrive.

"Perhaps even these liaison officers were included in your count," he said.

Atutubo also said he was unaware of the time last year when the President's husband arrived from abroad and requested 90 special events passes for the PSG, as the source had claimed.

"If ever there are 90 PSG, it is when the President—and sometimes she would be accompanied by the First Gentleman—goes to a barangay or a town that the PSG feels it really needs to secure. There are at least three layers of security during these instances," he said.

The INQUIRER learned of the number of PSG men at the airport on Monday from a well-placed source who showed proof of how the figure was arrived at.

The source is privy to security matters at the airport.

Arroyo said being a member of the First Family was not always a privilege.

"Yes, there are perks, but they are all superficial," he said. "But I don't take advantage of the perks. My good efforts as a public servant are sometimes not appreciated. That's the problem."

Arroyo said he was proud of his private and public track record.

He said his political career was unblemished by charges of graft and corruption and that his work ethic was beyond reproach.

Early at work

He also said he reported for work early, and always attended public hearings and plenary sessions.

Sometimes, people come to him to ask something from his mother, but he makes it a point not to interfere with her work or decisions, Arroyo said.

He added: "I can only give my view as a congressman. I'm not the spokesperson of my mother. But I think there is nothing wrong with what she's doing right now—reaching out to all forces in order to unite the country. Is that bad?" *With reports from Nikko Dizon; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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No. 2 customs official suspended

From page A1

the suspension order issued by the Office of the Ombudsman as he denied the veracity of the charges against him.

He said the matter could have been an offshoot of his drafting a list of 200 big-time smugglers in the country and the filing of appropriate charges against them.

"I am not surprised that people, who are moving heaven and earth to discredit me by coming out with all kinds of wild accusations against my person, have succeeded in using some of my in-laws to serve their end," the deputy commissioner said.

"Let me make myself clear that the suspension will not weaken my resolve to go after all these big-time smugglers in the bureau," he said.

Houses in Ayala Alabang

The Office of the Ombudsman has found that Nicolas owns a P26.6-million property in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, and which was later sold for P4.5 million; a property at No. 872 Acacia Drive, Ayala Alabang Village acquired under the name of his mother-in-law Gloria Lorenzo, and an undeclared real estate in Bocaue, Bulacan.

He was also found to have made a joint investment of P10 million with Ameriza Lim at the Laguna Technopark.

Lim came forward last month to say that she was fronting for the house of the Nicolas couple on Acacia Drive. She said that if the house was proven to be hers, she would donate it to the victims of the storms that hit Quezon province last November and December.

A 15-page suspension order approved by Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo on Feb. 8 noted that Lim signed a sworn statement stating that Nicolas' wife Yolanda "tearfully approached" her, asking if it "would be possible for the spouses Nicolas to transfer the said property in her name."

Relatives' affidavits

Lim said Yolanda made the offer "so as to spare their children from any embarrassment and to shield (Nicolas) from the lifestyle check being conducted by the government."

Apart from Lim, Yolanda's sister Maria Cielo P. Romasanta and nephew Thomas P. Johnson, executed separate affidavits dated Jan. 20, 2005, attesting to the luxurious lifestyle of the Nicolas couple and their ownership of the Ayala Alabang property.

The suspension order said Romasanta and Johnson expressed disgust over the use of Nicolas' mother-in-law, Gloria F. Lorenzo, as his dummy.

11 vehicles

Investigators also found that Nicolas owned 11 vehicles worth a total of P17.4 million, including a Honda CRV, a Honda Civic, two Hyundai Starexes, a Toyota Prado (worth P2.7 million), a Toyota Previa, a 1997 Mercedes-Benz (worth P2 million), a Mercedes-Benz C200k (worth P2,500,000) and a Mitsubishi Pajero.

Nicolas and his family were also found to have made several trips to the United States and Europe, spending P915,000.

"While the respondent claims to be leading a simple and modest lifestyle, his travels abroad and those of his entire family ... would seem to negate such assertion," the suspension order said.

The Nicolas couple have not declared any business in their statements of assets and liabilities.

For 1st time in 26 years, Pope . . .

From page A1

Vatican have locked horns in an unholy row as debate rages over the question of John Paul II's resignation.

Doctors have persuaded John Paul to prolong his stay at the hospital to be on the safe side. The Pope's eighth night in the hospital passed calmly, the Ansa news agency said early Wednesday.

In services later at St. Peter's Basilica, American Cardinal James Stafford presided in the name of John Paul—an unavoidable but no doubt reluctant substitution for a pope deeply stirred by the traditional period of penitence, sacrifice and reflection that culminates with Easter Sunday.

The Vatican did not say whether the Pope planned anything special in his room at Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic hospital to mark Ash Wednesday, a holiday he hasn't missed with public prayers since he assumed the papacy in 1978.

Next medical update

Officials say the Pontiff had been holding Mass regularly for the doctors and nurses treating him at the clinic. John Paul is expected to remain there at least until Thursday, when the Holy See issues its next medical update.

Ash Wednesday traditionally kicks off a few weeks of spiritual reflection for the Pope ahead of the taxing Holy Week services, which culminate with Easter on March 27.

With the Pope in such frail health, it remained unclear whether he would be able to preside over the traditional March 25 Good Friday prayer service at the Colosseum reenacting Christ's Passion. He has long since stopped walking in the Colosseum procession while carrying a cross; in recent years, the faithful have carried the cross and made the symbolic Stations of the Cross walk while the Pope observed and read a homily.

Debate over resignation

The Pope's long struggle with Parkinson's disease and crippling hip and knee ailments have many Roman Catholics questioning how long he can continue to serve.

The Vatican's No. 2 official, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, caused a stir this week by publicly suggesting for the first time that the Vatican may be discussing the sensitive issue.

POPE John Paul II: Debates about resignation

Popes may resign but cannot be forced to do so, and John Paul repeatedly has said he has no intention of abdicating. The last time a Pope willingly resigned was in the 13th century.

"It is bad taste to talk about it, and it's even worse because the starting point of this debate is the pope's flu," a leading Italian cardinal, Giovanni Battista Re, told the newspaper La Repubblica on Wednesday.

Language of the heart

On Tuesday, the prefect of a Vatican tribunal said the Pope would still be able to run the Church even if he reached the point where he couldn't speak.

"It is sufficient that one's will be expressed, and be expressed in a clear way," the official, Cardinal Mario Francesco Pompedda, told the newspaper La Stampa. "It can be expressed very well through writing, and in any case can be expressed also with clear and significant gestures."

The Rev. Miroslav Droszdek, a Polish priest, said he visited John Paul briefly in his room on Tuesday, although the Pope did not speak.

"Outside of the spoken word there is the language of the heart and the language of faith," Droszdek said. "It is enough . . . in this way we understand each other." *Reports from AP and AFP*

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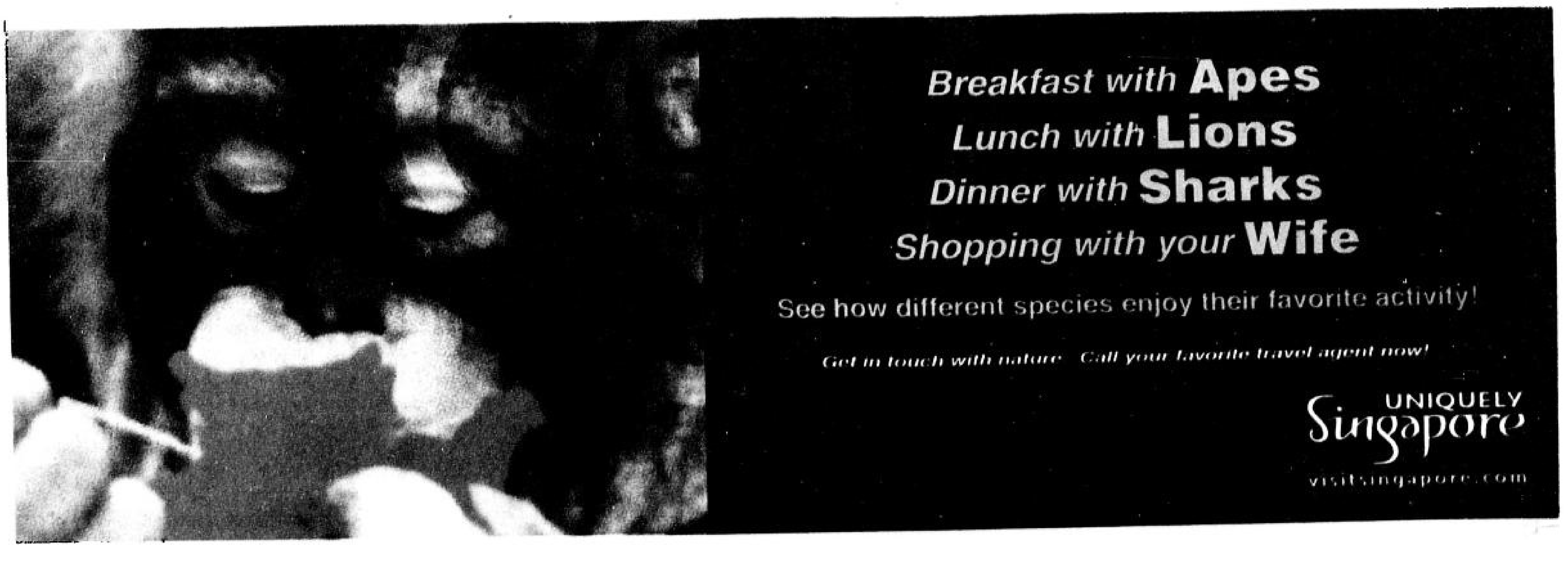
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Sharon, Abbas face obstacles to peace

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Mahmud Abbas were both facing threats to their authority Wednesday after agreeing at a landmark Middle East summit to end four years of bloodshed.

While world leaders hailed what they widely saw as a chance of a historic breakthrough between Israel and the Palestinians, commentators warned that many obstacles lay ahead on the road to peace.

Both Sharon and Abbas declared a ceasefire at the summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh but the main Palestinian militant movement Hamas swiftly dampened some of the optimism by saying it was not bound by the deal.

As Sharon prepared to brief his senior ministers on the outcome of his historic meeting with Abbas and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the shores of the Red Sea, his disgruntled Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom pledged to lead a campaign to ensure his flagship project to quit Gaza is put to a referendum.

Abbas was also facing a struggle to persuade militant factions such as Hamas to support his declared agreement with Sharon "to cease all acts of violence against Israelis and against Palestinians wherever they are."

In his summit speech, Sharon had reiterated his determination to implement his plan to pull troops and settlers out of the Gaza Strip.

The pullout, due to be completed by the end of the year, will be the first time ever that Israel has left occupied Palestinian territory and has been widely cited as another factor which could transform the peace process.

Shalom was conspicuous by his absence at the summit when Sharon reiterated that he was "absolutely determined to implement the disengagement plan."

The foreign minister instead took to the television studios where he said he would push for the project to be put to a referendum despite Sharon repeatedly ruling out such a move.

"I intend to lead a public, parliamentary and political initiative in favor of a referendum," he told private television. "I believe general agreement should be obtained from the people to avoid a serious struggle."

A source close to the prime minister charged that anyone who supported the idea of a referendum was "trying to sabotage the separation plan and bring about the downfall of the prime minister."

The aide also confirmed that Sharon was ready to meet Abbas in the West Bank city of Ramallah, which serves as the political capital of the Palestinian Authority, in a bid to further galvanize the peace process.

Abbas' team meanwhile was also preparing for possibly fraught talks with the factions to update them on the outcome of the summit.

While Hamas has been observing an unofficial period of calm, its initial reaction to Abbas' announcement showed that it is far from persuaded by his approach toward Israel.

Abbas' declaration "expresses only the position of the Palestinian Authority. It does not express the position of the Palestinian movements," said Hamas spokesperson Mushir al-Masri. *AFP*

US Aviation Ordnancemen, assigned to the "Swordsmen" of Fighter Squadron Three Two, lift 500-lb GBU-12 laser guided bombs onto a weapon station aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, in the Gulf south of Iraq. REUTERS

Rice calls for renewed EU-US ties

PARIS—The United States and France declared Tuesday they had opened a "new chapter" in their relations, drawing a line on two years of feuding over Iraq with pledges to cooperate in bringing stability to the Middle East.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, on the most delicate stop of her fence-mending tour of eight European nations, made a forceful appeal for improved transatlantic relations and met with French President Jacques Chirac, who said he wanted "constructive dialogue" with Washington.

"It is time to turn away from the disagreements of the past. It is time to open a new chapter in our relationship, and a new chapter in our alliance," she said in a speech to a prestigious political sciences institute in the capital before seeing Chirac.

"America stands ready to work with Europe on our common agenda, and Europe must stand ready to work with America. After all, history will surely judge us not by our old disagreements but our new achievements."

Foreign Minister Michel Barnier said he fully agreed that the time had come for Europe and the United States to "start a new phase, a new chapter."

Standing alongside Rice at a joint media conference, he said: "I'd like to say in public how much better the world works when the United States and Europe work together."

The issues central to Rice's visit focused on the US and EU approach to the Middle East, with particular attention given to Iraq, Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In her speech, Rice warned that, in the Arab world, "the status quo is not going to be acceptable" and called on Europe to march with the United States in spreading democracy to the Middle East.

Barnier, for his part, made a pointed call for the United States to rally to diplomatic efforts by France, Britain and Germany to rein in Iran's nuclear program, which Washington fears is being used to create weapons of mass destruction. *AFP*

LUCKY COINS

Chinese worshippers offer coins for prosperity while praying at Longhua Temple to greet the Lunar New Year in Shanghai. Tens of thousands of worshippers visited the ancient temple in China's business capital to welcome in the Year of the Rooster. REUTERS

Over 30 killed in Iraq suicide blasts, attacks

BAGHDAD—A suicide bombing against army recruits and a string of other attacks left more than 30 people dead across Iraq, with al-Qaida and its allies claiming responsibility for much of the new bloodshed.

A suicide bomber walked into a line of soldiers and recruits in Baghdad Tuesday killing at least 15 of them, while gunmen killed two sons and the bodyguard of an outspoken politician. Croatia also said one of its truck drivers working in Iraq had been killed.

Four Egyptians who spent 36 hours in the hands of kidnappers celebrated their freedom but more doubts arose about the fate of an Italian journalist abducted last Friday.

Al-Qaida said one of its militants walked into a crowd of Iraqis waiting to enlist at a Baghdad base and set off an explosive belt. Two soldiers and 13 recruits were killed, an interior ministry official said.

"I came to Baghdad from Hilla with two friends to join the army," said wounded Mohammed Abdel Hussein, 22. "We were queuing with several other young people when there was an enormous explosion in the middle of the group."

The attack was the latest in a wave of strikes targeting Iraqi security forces since the country's landmark Jan. 30 elections. *AFP*

All dead on crashed Afghan jet, authorities confirm

KABUL—All 104 people onboard an Afghan airliner that hit a mountain last week are dead, authorities said, confirming the country's worst air disaster.

Nato and Afghan soldiers who inspected the crash site, 30 km east of the capital, found human remains among the scattered wreckage and deep snow but no signs of life.

"The troops found that no one was left alive from the crash," said a statement from an Afghan government commission investigating the disaster on Tuesday, offering condolences to the victims' families. "Now the search and rescue operation is complete, the recovery operation has started to investigate the cause of the crash."

The Boeing 737 operated by Kam Air, Afghanistan's first post-Taliban private airline, vanished from radar screens last Thursday after it approached Kabul airport in a blizzard from the western city of Herat. There were 96 passengers and eight crew on board, most of them Afghans but also including nine Turks, six Americans, four Russians and three Italians.

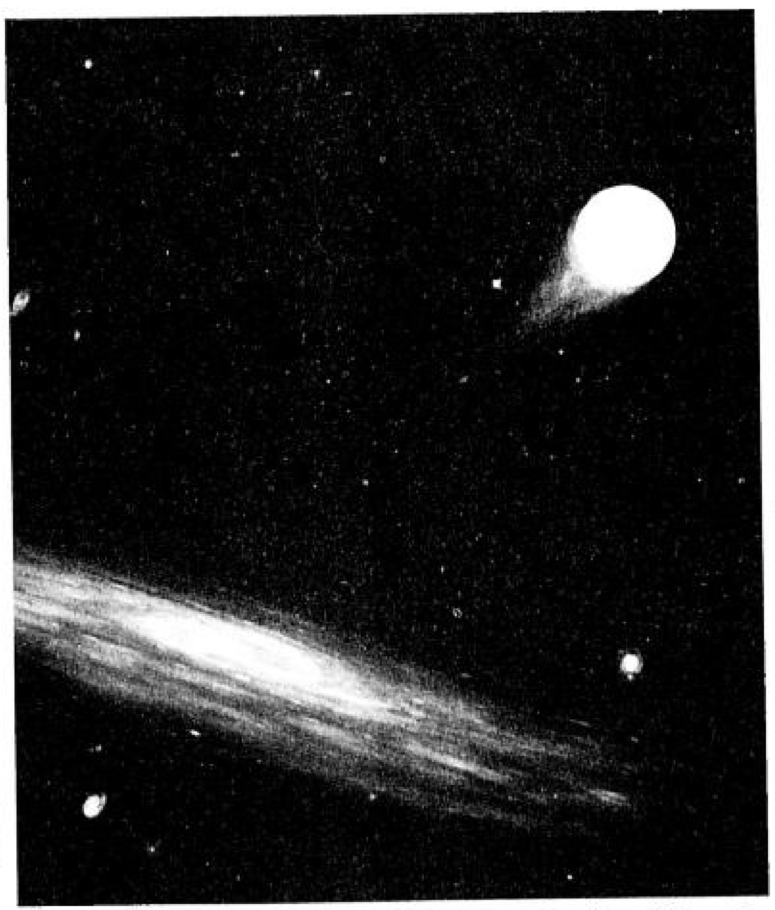
Afghan authorities say the cause of the crash remains a mystery and are calling in US experts to help investigate. The aircraft's flight recorder has yet to be located.

Nato helicopters spotted part of the wreckage on Saturday, but freezing fog, low clouds and up to 2,5 meters of snow have limited their visits to the scene to just a few hours so far.

The commission said Tuesday that the plane hit near an old military lookout dating back to the Soviet occupation of the country in the 1980s and that the site was mined.

Officials say it could take weeks to collect the bodies, fueling the frustration of relatives worried about scavenging wolves and birds and fast-spreading rumors that looters may have already reached the crash site.

Kam Air resumed flying Tuesday, but one of its jets carrying 220 passengers turned away from the Afghan capital faced with the same conditions that accompanied last week's disaster. The airline said the plane returned to Dubai. *AP*



AN OUTCAST star is zooming out of the Milky Way, ejected from the galactic center after a close encounter with a black hole, astronomers reported. The so-called outcast star is shown in an artist's impression at its current location in the distant outskirts of the Milky Way. *(See story on Page A10.)* REUTERS

Death toll in Asian tsunami disaster tops 296,000

JAKARTA—The number of people believed killed in December's tsunami disaster topped 296,000 Wednesday, more than six weeks after the catastrophe, as Indonesia again increased its number of dead.

Indonesia was hardest-hit by the Dec. 26 quake and tsunamis, with a total of 243,530 people listed as dead or missing, the health ministry said in its latest figures.

The ministry said the number of people confirmed dead and buried had increased to 115,628 while the number of people missing and almost certainly dead remained at 127,774.

Thailand's toll remained at 5,393 confirmed dead. A further 3,071 people were listed as missing, more than 1,000 of them foreigners.

The toll in Sri Lanka, which was second hardest hit by the catastrophe, stood at 30,957, according to the Center for National Operations.

The number of people listed as missing was 5,637, but many were expected to be among those never formally identified, hurriedly buried and included in the confirmed death toll.

In neighboring India, the official death toll was 10,749 with 5,640 still reported missing and feared dead.

The government was soon expected to draw up final casualty figures in which the missing were declared dead.

Burma has said 61 people were killed in the tsunamis.

At least 82 people were killed and another 26 were missing in the Maldives. *AFP*

DEATH TOLL	
Indonesia	243,530
Sri Lanka	30,957
India	16,389
Thailand	5,393
Maldives	82
Malaysia	68
Burma	61
Bangladesh	2
Somalia	298
Tanzania	10
Kenya	1
Total	296,791

The figures include 127,774 listed as missing in Indonesia and 5,640 in India.

43 activists arrested in Nepal

KATMANDU—Nepal's government said Wednesday that it has arrested 43 people to ensure law and order in the Himalayan nation since the king suspended civil liberties and imposed emergency rule last week.

The detainees, including top political leaders and student activists, were arrested for their "own personal safety" as well as to stem potential disturbances, a home ministry statement said. Twenty-five of them are being detained in government centers, while 18 others are under house arrest.

Last week, King Gyanendra dismissed an interim government, imposed emergency rule, and ordered a communications blackout in the Himalayan nation in a power grab decried by foreign leaders as a step backward for democracy.

A panel of nine top UN human rights experts—who report to the world body's top watchdog, the UN Human Rights Commission—said this week that they are "deeply concerned" by Gyanendra's ouster of the government and the ensuing clampdown.

"The wave of arrests and detentions and the actions against the media are a serious setback for the country," they said in a joint statement. *AP*

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Both US East and West coasts vulnerable to tsunamis

WASHINGTON—Both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the Americas are vulnerable to tsunamis like the one that devastated Indian Ocean shorelines in December and experts said on Tuesday they are scrambling to try to get warning system in place before politicians lose interest.

"It's not if but when," said Laura Kong, director of the International Tsunami Information Center run by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization.

She and other experts want to use momentum from the Dec. 26 Indian Ocean tsunami that killed or left missing nearly 300,000 people to press for a global warning system.

Experts have been trying since a tsunami hit Chile's coast in 1960, but the disasters occur so infrequently that it is difficult to keep the attention of governments, she said.

The magnitude 9 earthquake off the coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra lifted the sea floor 15 feet and displaced trillions of gallons of water, causing the monster wave that swamped coastlines as far away as Somalia.

The quake registered right away, but it took several hours for instruments to show just how large it was, Kong told a news conference arranged by the Smithsonian Institution's magazine.

"What they didn't have information on was whether a real tsunami had been generated," she said. There were no underwater monitoring stations to measure the displacement of water.

There are such stations in the Pacific, where 85 percent of tsunamis occur, but not in other vulnerable areas.

George Maul, a professor of Oceanography at the Florida Institute of Technology, has been trying to organize a tsunami warning system for the Atlantic and Caribbean for years.

There are several active Caribbean volcanoes that could set off an inundating wave, he said. There are also active zones in the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa and off the coasts of Spain and Portugal that could generate tsunamis.

The best protection, he said, is a program to inform people about the warning signs of a tsunami so they can flee.

In January US officials said they would spend $37.5 million over two years to set up new deep-sea warning systems aimed at giving near-total coverage for the US coastline.

"We estimate that within 100 km of the coastline globally, there will be 600 million more people by 2025," Maul said.

The best system may be based on old air-alert sirens, said Timothy Walsh of the Washington Department of Natural Resources. He foresees a system of loudspeakers on poles hooked directly into the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather warning system.

Many communities will have to be evacuated within half an hour or less of a big quake in the Northwest's Cascadia subduction zone, but roads could be damaged.

"The evacuation will have to be made by foot and right away," said Walsh.

It might also be possible to build earthquake- and tsunami-proof buildings, tall enough to survive inundation and strong enough to survive the battering they would take. *Reuters*

Experts develop computer model to predict next tsunami

WASHINGTON—Philip Liu of Cornell University in New York and several of his colleagues rushed to Sri Lanka after the Dec. 26 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Liu's team had developed a computer model to predict how a quake might generate a tsunami and wanted to test it.

Such a system might be plugged in to an early warning network to help determine which quakes are likely to cause a tsunami, Liu said.

Liu's team wants to develop a quick way to measure a quake and plug the data into the model to predict whether and where a tsunami may hit in time to warn people.

In the case of the Sumatra quake, the model showed it displacing a column of water both up and down.

It should, according to the model, have sent a trough first and then a wave in one direction, and a giant wave followed by a trough and then more waves in another.

And that is what happened, Liu told a news conference organized by the Smithsonian Institution's Smithsonian magazine.

While a "negative" wave went to Thailand, causing waters to recede before the wave hit, a "positive" wave hit parts of India and Sri Lanka, giving no warning before the waters rose.

Furthermore, the model showed the waves wrapping around the island of Sri Lanka, which also happened in December.

"You would think the (Colombo) region was protected," Liu said, pointing to Sri Lanka's capital on the west coast of the island, away from Indonesia. "But Colombo actually was affected."

Tsunamis are rare events and while Liu looked for eyewitness verification of his prediction methods, other scientists said they are forced sometimes to literally dig for clues.

Jody Bourgeois and colleagues at the University of Washington examined sediments left in Chile by a tsunami generated by a magnitude 9.5 quake in May 1960.

They visited the village of Mehuin, at the mouth of Rio Lingue in southern Chile.

"People here knew to go to high ground," she said. Only 40 were killed, although the tsunami turned what had been a village and farmers' fields into a wide place in the river.

The villagers and farmers showed her where fields had been, and her team saw clear evidence of heavy deposits of dirt and sand washed over the area by the tsunami.

Back home, they saw similar patterns in Washington's Puget Sound and elsewhere. The Juan de Fuca plate off the Washington coast has a subduction zone, where one underwater plate slides under another, similar to the Sumatran zone.

As in Indonesia's Aceh province, the tsunami from such a quake would arrive in just minutes.

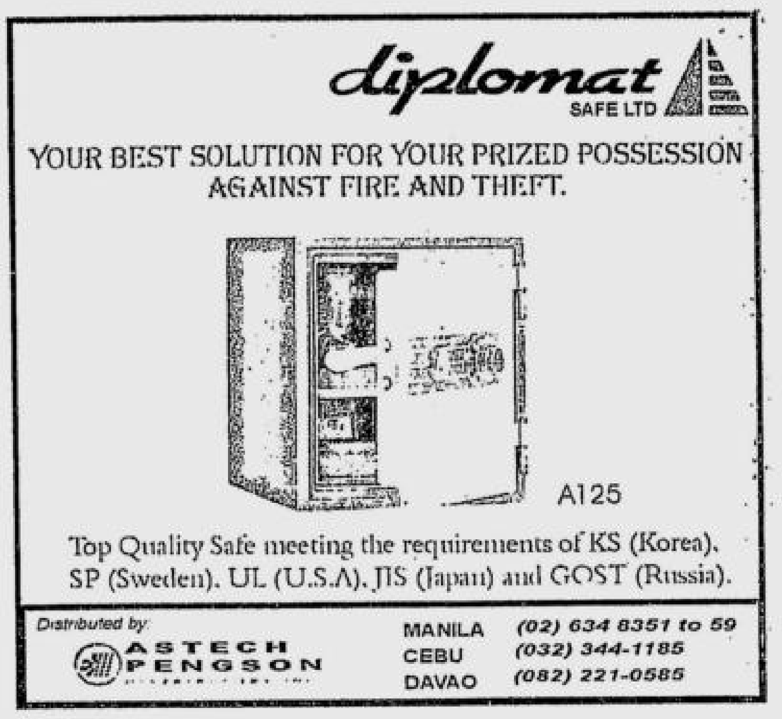
Earthquakes are not the only threat.

James Luhr, a volcanologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, said Mount St. Helens, which erupted and collapsed in 1980, dumped 2.6 cubic km of ash, mud and rock on the surrounding area.

California's Mt. Shasta deposited 46 cubic km of material, changing the landscape in a way that can still be seen clearly 350,000 years later.

US Geological Survey sonographic scans show extensive areas around old underwater volcanoes near Hawaii and the Canary Islands off Africa that make Mt. Shasta's deposits look tiny.

Some contain up to 500 cubic km of debris. Luckily, Luhr said, they only seem to occur every 125,000 years or so. *Reuters*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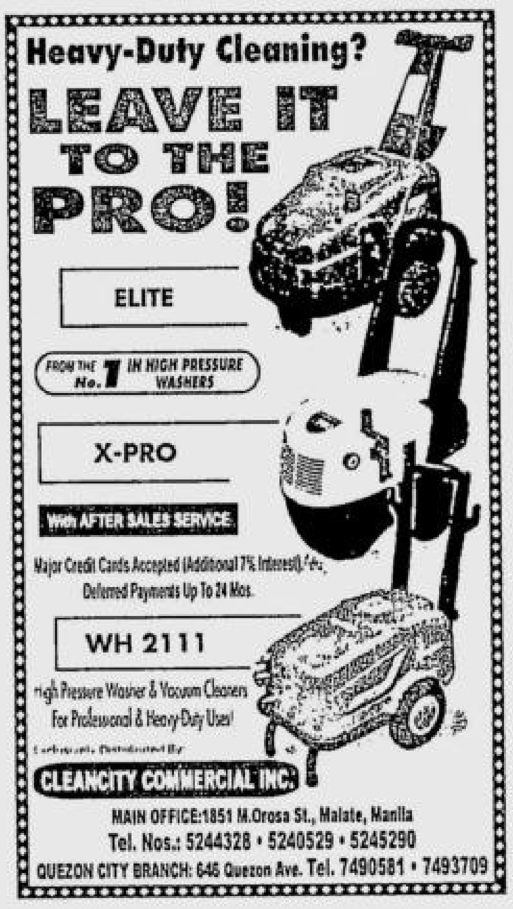
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Dolly the Sheep scientist gets cloning license in Britain

WILMUT

DOLLY

LONDON—The scientist who attracted the world's attention by cloning Dolly the Sheep is about to take another major step for medical research: cloning human embryos and extracting stem cells to unravel the mysteries of motor neuron disease.

Ian Wilmut, who led the team that created Dolly at Scotland's Roslin Institute in 1996, was granted a cloning license Tuesday by British regulators to study how nerve cells go awry to cause the incurable muscle-wasting illness.

The experiments do not involve creating cloned babies but the license has nonetheless stirred fresh controversy over the issue and prompted abortion foes and other biological conservatives to condemn the decision.

"Are we supposed to be appeased by professor Wilmuts' declarations that the human embryos will be destroyed after experimentation and that his team has no intention of producing cloned babies?" said Julia Millington of the London-based ProLife Alliance. "All human cloning is intrinsically wrong and should be outlawed. However, the creation of cloned human embryos destined for experimentation and subsequent destruction is particularly abhorrent."

Wilmut, speaking after the announcement at a press briefing in Edinburgh, Scotland, defended the move.

"We all take for granted the very much healthier life that we have now compared with people 100 years ago," he said. "I think that the majority of people support this type of research and hope it will be successful in helping to bring useful treatment for diseases like motor neuron disease."

The license is the second one approved since Britain became the first country to legalize research cloning in 2001. The first was granted in August to a team that hopes to use cloning to create insulin-producing cells that could be transplanted into diabetics.

In the latest project, Wilmut and motor neuron expert Christopher Shaw of the Institute of Psychiatry in London plan to clone cells from patients with the disease, derive blank-slate stem cells from the resulting embryo, make them develop into nerve cells and compare their evolution to that of cells derived from healthy embryos.

The cloning technique, called cell nuclear replacement, is the same as that used to create Dolly. It has already been applied to humans by scientists in South Korea, who created the clone to extract stem cells.

Dr. Brian Dickie, director of research at the London-based Motor Neuron Disease Association, said the experiments could revolutionize the future treatment of motor neuron disease, which afflicts about 350,000 people worldwide and kills about 100,000 people a year.

"It's about 135 years since (motor neuron disease) was first characterized and here we are, more than a century later, and we still don't know the cause of over 95 percent of cases, we haven't got a diagnostic test for the disease and we've made very modest inroads in slowing the disease progression."

"This opens up opportunities on three fronts: to understand how motor neurons become sick and die, to identify genetic causes of the disease and to rapidly screen new drugs," Dickie said. *AP*

Outcast star zooms out of Milky Way

WASHINGTON—An outcast star is zooming out of the Milky Way, the first ever seen escaping the galaxy, astronomers reported on Tuesday.

The star is heading for the emptiness of intergalactic space after being ejected from the heart of the Milky Way following a close encounter with a black hole, said Warren Brown, an astronomer at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

The outcast is going so fast—over 2.4 million kph—that astronomers believe it was lobbed out of the galaxy by the tremendous force of a black hole thought to sit at the Milky Way's center. That speed is about twice the velocity needed to escape the galaxy's grip, Brown said by telephone.

"We have never before seen a star moving fast enough to completely escape the confines of our galaxy," he said. "We're tempted to call it the outcast star because it was forcefully tossed from its home."

The star used to be part of a binary pair, waltzing with its companion star close to the rim of the black hole. In this case, "close" is a relative term; the actual distance was probably about 50 times the 150 million-km distance between Earth and the sun.

As the two stars twirled around each other, they were pulled faster and faster toward the edge of the black hole, one of those monster drains in space whose gravity is so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape once it is consumed.

While the companion star was captured by the black hole, the outcast continued on its whirling path around its edge.

Objects go faster the closer they get to black holes and this star was probably moving at extraordinary speed, perhaps as high as 32 million kph. That very speed, coupled with the speed of its twirling, sent the outcast zooming toward the edge of the Milky Way and beyond.

At this point, the outcast is about 180,000 light-years from Earth, in an outer region of the galaxy known as the halo.

A light-year is about 10 trillion km, the distance light travels in a year. *Reuters*

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
TOLL REGULATORY BOARD

NORTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY
Approved Initial Authorized Toll Rates

Notice is hereby given that the Toll Regulatory Board ("TRB") has approved the following initial Authorized Toll Rates for the Closed System and Open System applicable to Phase 1 of the North Luzon Tollway Project starting at 12:00 A.M., February 8, 2005, Tuesday:

Vehicle Class	Closed system (Peso per km)	Open system (Peso per entry)
Class 1	2.483838	42.406999
Class 2	6.209596	106.017496
Class 3	7.451515	127.220996

This notice is being made pursuant to TRB Board Resolution No. 2005-04 dated 27 January 2005 which requires publication of the initial Authorized Toll Rates once in a newspaper of general circulation in accordance with law.

Any interested expressway user shall have the right to file within a period of ninety (90) days from the date of publication of this notice, a petition with the TRB at the 2nd Floor, Integrated Bar of the Philippines Building, Julia Vargas Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City for a review of the initial toll rates.

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Valenzuela	42											
Lawang Bato	42	42										
Meycauayan	42	42										
Marilao	42	42	42									
Bocaue	51	51	51	51								
Tabang	75	75	75	75	23							
Sta. Rita	78	78	78	78	27							
Pulilan	95	95	95	95	44	17						
San Simon	124	124	124	124	73	46	29					
San Fernando	146	146	146	146	95	68	51	22				
Mexico	163	163	163	163	112	85	68	40	18			
Angeles	184	184	184	184	133	106	89	60	38	21		
Dau	203	203	203	203	151	125	108	79	57	39	18	
Sta. Ines	203	203	203	203	151	125	108	79	57	39	18	13

CLASS 2	BWK	VAL	MEY	MAR	BOC	STR	PUL	SNM	SNF	MXC	ANG	DAU
Mapulang Lupa	106											
Valenzuela	106											
Lawang Bato	106	106										
Meycauayan	106	106										
Marilao	106	106	106									
Bocaue	129	129	129	129								
Tabang	188	188	188	188	59							
Sta. Rita	196	196	196	196	67							
Pulilan	238	238	238	238	109	42						
San Simon	311	311	311	311	181	115	72					
San Fernando	366	366	366	366	236	170	127	55				
Mexico	410	410	410	410	280	213	171	99	44			
Angeles	462	462	482	452	333	266	223	151	96	52		
Dau	507	507	507	507	378	311	269	197	142	98	45	
Sta. Ines	507	507	507	507	378	311	269	197	142	98	45	33

CLASS 3	BWK	VAL	MEY	MAR	BOC	STR	PUL	SNM	SNF	MXC	ANG	DAU
Mapulang Lupa	127											
Valenzuela	127											
Lawang Bato	127	127										
Meycauayan	127	127										
Marilao	127	127	127									
Bocaue	155	155	155	155								
Tabang	225	225	225	225	70							
Sta. Rita	235	235	235	235	80							
Pulilan	286	286	286	286	131	51						
San Simon	373	373	373	373	218	138	87					
San Fernando	439	439	439	439	284	204	153	68				
Mexico	491	491	491	491	336	256	205	118	53			
Angeles	554	554	554	554	399	319	268	181	115	63		
Dau	609	609	609	609	454	374	323	236	170	117	55	
Sta. Ines	609	609	609	609	454	374	323	236	170	117	55	39

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Togo's protest fizzles out; Africans eye sanctions

LOME—People in Togo's capital Lome began returning to work on Tuesday after a protest against the Army's naming of the dead president's son leader fizzled out, but African states kept up the pressure and threatened sanctions.

Opposition parties and African leaders have criticized the appointment of Faure Gnassingbe as unconstitutional and tantamount to a military coup. Gnassingbe was sworn in on Monday despite international criticism.

Earlier thousands of workers in the capital Lome stayed at home. But by late afternoon, business was nearly back to normal.

Market stalls had reopened and traffic was almost as heavy as usual. Opposition organizers said they were disappointed.

The military named Gnassingbe, a 39-year-old civilian, just hours after his father Gnassingbe Eyadema, Africa's longest serving leader, died.

The former French colony's constitution was hastily tweaked on Sunday to retroactively allow the move by making Gnassingbe his father's legal successor and clearing the way for him to run the country until 2008.

France and African leaders decried the transfer of power as unconstitutional. The Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) will hold an emergency summit in Niger on Wednesday.

"Ecowas cannot tolerate any unconstitutional regime change and so the situation created in Togo cannot be accepted," said Ecowas Executive Secretary Mohamed ibn Chambas after a weekend trip to Lome to try to mediate with the new authorities.

The African Union (AU) on Tuesday threatened Togo with sanctions unless it restored "constitutional legality."

AU sanctions would mean Togo would no longer be allowed to take part in any meetings or decisions.

Some people in Lome said they had initially stayed at home because of fear. In the past, opposition militants have sometimes threatened people who break protest orders.

"I agree with the calling of a protest. It's a choice and that's democracy but I think that people did not come out because they are intimidated," said Marie-Louise, a trader.

Organizers said they had hoped for more support.

"The result is very mixed. It is not what we expected," said Jean-Pierre Fabre, secretary general of the Union of Forces for Change, the main opposition party. "We will wait until tomorrow to see what actions to take," he added.

Togo was gripped by political unrest in the late 1990s. *Reuters*

GNASSINGBE (left), the son of Togo's deceased president, was formally sworn in as president, in Lome, on Feb. 7. REUTERS

Sudan rejects calls for int'l trials on Darfur

UNITED NATIONS—Sudan on Tuesday again rejected calls to hold any trials over the bloodshed in Darfur outside the country, as the world community looks to shore up a peace deal after Sudan's long civil war.

First Vice President Ali Osman Taha and rebel movement leader John Garang briefed the UN Security Council on last month's accord, which ended decades of north-south conflict and raised hopes of a comprehensive national peace.

But UN envoy Jan Pronk said there was a stalemate in the separate conflict between the government and other rebels in the western Darfur area, where an international commission said gross human rights violations have occurred.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has called for those responsible to be brought before the International Criminal Court, while the United States wants to see a dedicated war crimes tribunal for Sudan set up in Tanzania.

Taha reiterated the Khartoum government's opposition to both options, saying Sudan's courts could handle the matter.

"There are no grounds to warrant taking suspects outside the country," he told reporters. "It will push things to degenerate rather than to help people reconcile."

Garang, head of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) that launched civil war against the government in 1983, said the international community's main focus should first be to stop the ongoing Darfur bloodshed.

"Impunity cannot be let go but I want to focus on the immediate problem. The immediate problem is to achieve peace in Darfur," he said. "We have a political and moral obligation."

Tens of thousands have died in the past two years in Darfur, as the government turned to proxy militias known as Janjaweed to violently put down a rebellion against Khartoum.

The Janjaweed are blamed for a scorched-earth campaign of rape and murder that the United States has called a genocide, and Pronk said Khartoum has not lived up to its pledges to bring those responsible to justice. *AFP*

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Sanctuary

EDITORIAL

IN THE DEPTHS of one of the coldest winters in recent years, Filipinos and Americans will come together this weekend in Cincinnati, Ohio, to pay tribute to two Jewish brothers, Alex and Morton Frieder. They were businessmen who had a cigar factory in Manila before World War II. At the time, Adolf Hitler's persecution of the Jews in Germany led to a policy of permitting emigration. The problem, as Jews trying to flee Nazi persecution soon found out, was that few countries were willing to take them.

Individual Jews found refuge where they could: in France, Switzerland, Holland, Portugal, to name but a few countries. However, the League of Nations, the precursor of today's United Nations, had closed the doors of its member nations. The Jews that did manage to find refuge in the member countries of the league, then, did so one by one, or two by two. Entire communities of tens, even hundreds of thousands, in the rapidly-expanding borders of the Third Reich, had nowhere to go. Even the United States, which had its share of anti-Jewish feelings, would not, as an official policy, permit the mass immigration of Jews.

There were two exceptions: the United Kingdom and the Philippines. The United Kingdom permitted what has gone down in history as the "kindertransport," or children's trains, which brought Jewish children to foster homes. However, neither the parents or the adult escorts of the children were given refuge. Still, in this way, 10,000 or so Jewish lives were saved by the decision of the British Parliament to give refuge to the children.

In the Philippines, the Frieder brothers, saddened by seeing Jewish refugees denied entry to European colonies in the Far East, requested the government to give refuge to the Jews. American officials such as High Commissioner Paul V. McNutt, the representative of the president of the United States in Manila, and Dwight D. Eisenhower, then a major acting as one of the advisors to the fledgling Philippine Army, also lobbied on the Jews' behalf.

In the face of some prominent local opposition, President Manuel Quezon gave permission for 10,000 Jews a year to find refuge in the Philippines for a period of 10 years. He even lent a parcel of land belonging to him (near what is now the Philippine School of Business Administration), for a refugee center for the Jews.

Time, however, was not on the side of the refugees. In 1939, war broke out in Europe, ending the Nazi policy of permitting emigration. By 1941, the Philippines, too, had been engulfed by war.

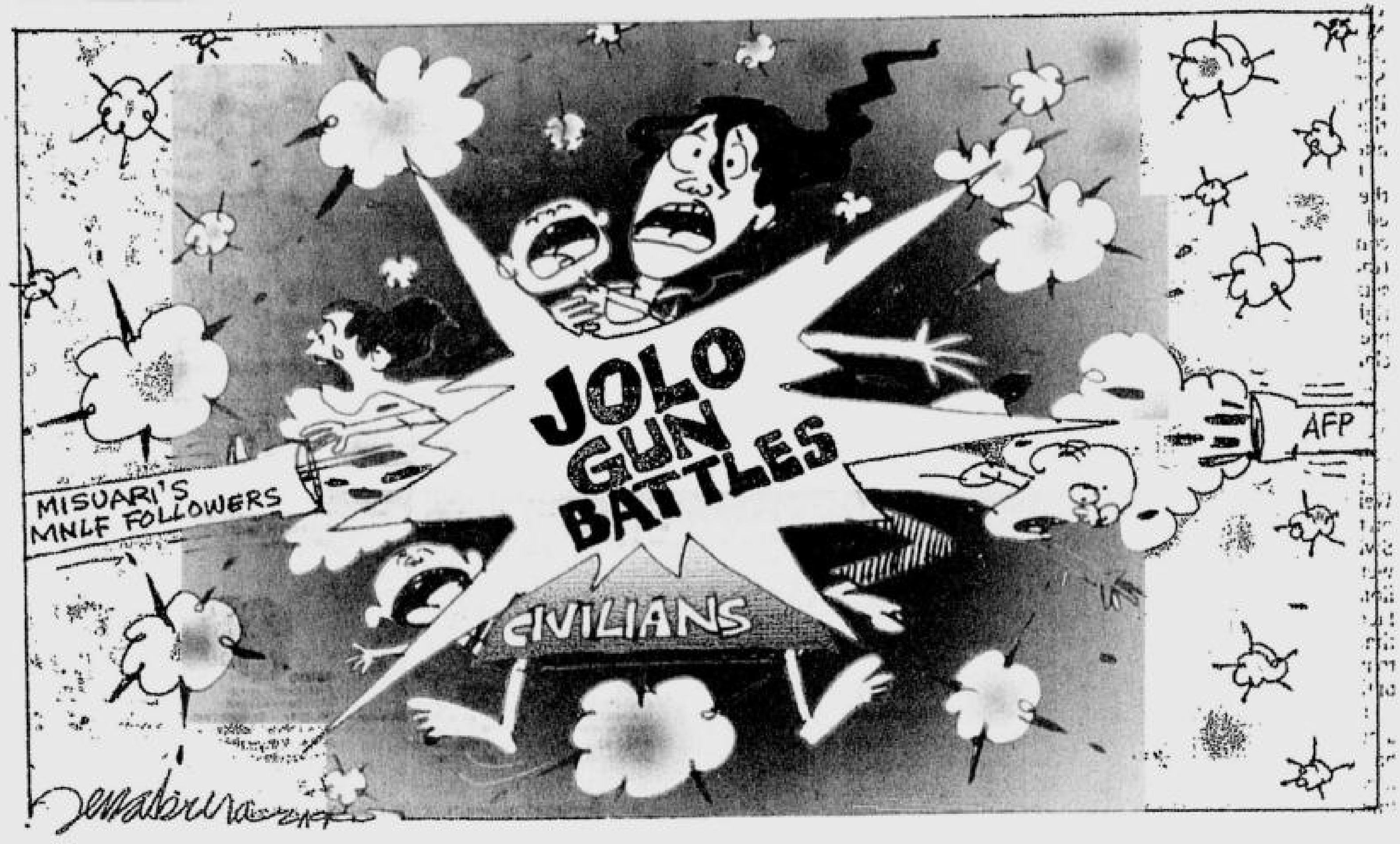
And yet 1,200 Jews, some of them entire families, found a safe haven in the Philippines. Sadly, some of these did not survive the horrors of the Japanese occupation. Those who did survive went on to start new lives in Israel, Australia and the United States, though some stayed.

This year, the 60th anniversary of the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Manila by the Japanese, some of the survivors and their descendants gathered to thank the Filipino people, the Frieder brothers, and all who came to their aid, at a time when the world, it seemed, had toughened its heart to the persecution of the Jews. Nazi tyranny ended up claiming six million Jewish lives. Those who escaped by coming to Manila are a fraction of this number.

As the world came to know the story of "Schindler's List," there is a Jewish saying that goes, "Whoever saves a life, saves the world." Filipinos are justly proud of doing what they did to save so many lives.

It may be just a small footnote to history, but what the Philippines did was a little bright light in the darkness that was the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews. And this footnote to the Holocaust story deepened our ties to the Jewish people. Thus in 1947, the Philippines cast the deciding vote in the United Nations, making the creation of the state of Israel possible.

As a people, Filipinos know what it is like to be in bondage, as ancient Israel was. We have had heroes who endured exile, too. Almost by nature, we have always been ready to open our arms to the homeless, the stateless, the oppressed. We should be proud to have and to keep this precious and noble national heritage of compassion.



Frantic race

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"WHAT we discovered in Panglao Island in Bohol was absolutely daunting," admitted Dr. Philippe Bouchet of France's National History Museum.

Apparently ill-at-ease with adjectives, this marine scientist was sketching, before a packed room of professors and students, the stunning range of species found by 74 other savants, researchers and divers from 19 countries in their study of Panglao waters. These ranged from a "blind crab" in mangroves at the Abatan river to a Balicasag Island shell last seen in an 1897 survey.

"Panglao Marine Biodiversity Project 2004" is arguably the world's most comprehensive inventory of crustaceans and coral reef mollusks, said Dr. Danilo Largo, chair of San Carlos University's biology department. Largo and Bouchet were the principal investigators for the project.

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asean Regional Center for Biodiversity Conservation and Total Corporate Foundation supported the inventory within the so-called "Golden Triangle": the Philippines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

In this "Triangle" are more species of coral, sponges, fish and invertebrates than anywhere else, Largo explained. The "Triangle" crests a "species gradient" that thins out, in richness, across the Indo-Pacific area.

Tacked below Tagbilaran City, Panglao harbored more than just coral gardens for scuba divers, scientists always felt. Now, hypothesis is hardening into data.

The project focused on Panglao's coastal ecosystem. Teams scoured the intertidal mudflats between Tagbilaran and Cortes, to narrow rocky platforms on Panglao's nothern coast and Balicasag. Some 59 sites were sampled intertidally, using a range of tools: traps, tange (pamo) nets to yabbie pumps that suck out minute organisms in burrows.

So far, the project's ongoing inventory has turned up 1,200 species of "decapod crustaceans" or shrimps, lobsters, crabs.

The result came as a total surprise to the crustacean researchers. "Put that in perspective and you'll understand why," Bouchet said. From the cold temperate Kuriles in the north to the tropical Ryukus in the south, Japan has just over 1,600 species.

Known for his worldwide survey, the Singapore scientist on the team "was state of the art," Bouchet recalled. "We showed him a stone crab, from the Parthenopidea family, trapped 20 meters from our lab. 'I've never seen this before,' he said. This is a new species."

The scientists anticipated Panglao would yield a rich trove of mollusks or snails, clams or squids. It did. They found almost 6,000 species crammed within the 15,000-hectare study site.

"Again, see that in perspective," Bouchet suggested. "The Mediterranean is 300 million hectares. And it has just 2,024 species of mollusks and 340 crustaceans."

The Panglao team explored Abangan's pitch-dark mangrove channel waters, part of the over 1,150 dives the expedition did. They came up with, among other things, a blind crab never seen before. "Over how many million of years did it take to adapt to an environment without light?" Bouchet asked.

Questions like that will keep an international network of scientists engrossed for many years, including a startling range of brilliant micro-mollusks. Analysis of Panglao findings are now proceeding in Cebu, Paris, San Francisco, Singapore and other study centers.

"There could be 10 to 15 potential Panglaos here," Bouchet said. "But for how long, as you seek a balance between activities like tourism and conservation?"

There's a race to identify species—and possible uses of their unique genes—before spreading human settlements drive some of them to extinction. Can this rich bio-diversity survive in complex tropical environments, often with imploding populations?

Genes are building blocks of life. They combine into new plants, food, medicine, etc. They can spin off into Vitamin-A rich rice or anti-cancer medicine, like Madagascar's periwinkle.

Estimates vary on how many species exist. But roughly less than 15 percent, most scientists agree, have been catalogued. Like Abangan river's blind crab, about 85 percent remains to be tallied. "It's a world complex beyond understanding and valuable beyond measure," Worldwatch Institute says.

But today's decimation of species is a "killing curve." Unless reversed, Oxford University scientists estimate that within 30 years, a fifth of all species could become extinct.

Squirting cyanide into reefs originated in the Philippines and Thailand in the 1960s. It devastated reefs. And in 20 years, cyanide tainted over four out of every five kilos of fish, the United Nations Environmental Programme notes.

Dynamite decimated fishing grounds. Only 4 percent of reefs here remain in excellent condition, updates of the "Inventory of Coral Resources" reveals. "The most significant decline has been in the Visayas."

Giant clams, Mindoro tamaraws, Cebu cinnamon have been virtually wiped out. What species disappeared when loggers creamed the remaining forests in Aurora and Quezon? No one knows.

When a species becomes extinct, so do its unique God-given genes, the late National Scientist Dioscoro Umali said. "That forecloses little-understood options for our grandchildren. Obliteration is forever."

That's what the Panglao study is all about

* * *

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The point is justice

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

FRANKLY, I can't understand why Imelda Marcos should be elated at the recent US appeals court ruling saying it could not overturn the Philippine Supreme Court decision on their Swiss deposits. As Jovito Salonga pointed out the other day, the US court ruling had become moot and academic when in November 2003 the Philippine Supreme Court ruled to forfeit the $683-million Marcos Swiss deposits in favor of the Philippine government.

The government then apportioned the money as follows: (1) the bulk to go to agrarian reform, (2) a portion to go to attorney's fees, and (3) $150 million to the indemnification of the martial law torture victims. The US appeals court ruling doesn't change one bit of this. The torture victims will still be compensated for their (literal) pains, something Congress has been working on this past year or so.

Imelda's elation is incomprehensible—unless former peasant organizer and now Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano is right to suspect that the former First Lady hopes to make a deal with the Arroyo government over a division of spoils, which this ruling presumably signals, or can be made to signal. A suspicion that may not be unfounded. Salonga noted that only last month, on Jan. 13, Imelda visited Malacañang for the first time since she fled the country and came away expressing support for the Arroyo administration.

Years ago, in 1993, the Presidential Commission on Good Government sought to strike a deal with the Marcoses, proposing a 75-25 sharing of the Marcos loot, the government to get the 75 percent and the Marcoses to get immunity in addition to the 25 percent. The Supreme Court voided the deal. The possibility that the Arroyo administration is reopening it, given particularly that it is cash-strapped and facing a fiscal crisis, looms large.

But whether or not there's a plot underlying Imelda's interpretation of the US court ruling, my unhappiness over all this is that the whole question of the remuneration of the victims has been lost in a blaze of legal fireworks. I do appreciate the fact that many years ago Robert Swift undertook, at much expense to himself though also with the expectation of much reward if he was successful, to prosecute the class suit in the United States against the Marcoses on behalf of the torture victims. But I remember that, from the start, I expressed the hope that the legal aspects of the case would not bury the moral, or indeed political, aspects of it.

The danger was there. The torture victims stood to be portrayed as money-mad, particularly where the talk boiled down to dollars and cents or how much went to whom. And they were, particularly when they began to squabble among themselves, having fallen into two rival groups. The ideological aspects of the division were lost on the media, the proprietary aspects of it were not, as both groups claimed to be the true representative of the victims. The media had a field day caricaturing the spat between those who believed in Robert Swift and those who did not.

I did, and do, think the torture victims ought to be compensated. I've always argued against the idea, put forward by many quarters particularly after the Supreme Court ruled to give the Marcos Swiss deposits to government, that since all Filipinos suffered during martial law, no single group has any special claim to the money in full or part. My position then, as now, is that the torture victims were not just victims, they were also heroes. They were tortured because they raised a fist against martial law, many of them well before it became fashionable—and safe—to do so. The least we can do for them is ease their pain—nothing could ever pay for their monumental losses—and pay tribute to their heroism literally by paying tribute to them. The torture victims do not owe government for designating a part of the Marcos loot to them, government owes it to them.

Quite apart from that, indemnifying the victims reminds this forgetful country forcefully of what took place during martial law. Martial law did not just rob the country of its money, it robbed the country of its people. Many of them, the youth, who died shouting freedom in their loud and pure voices in places God and government forgot. Indemnifying the victims is seizing this country by the scruff of its neck and forcing it to look at itself through a mirror.

But I've always thought, and said, that for that to happen, the victims needed to raise the political and moral dimensions of their ordeal far higher than its financial and legal possibilities. Remuneration was gravy, not meat and potatoes. Elsewhere in the civilized world, or among countries that were once enslaved and struggled to regain their self-respect, the legal flows from the moral, law draws its strength from right and wrong. That is as it should be, the moral is the foundation of the legal, not the other way around. Look at the way the Jews have carried out their long and implacable search to bring the perpetrators of the Holocaust to justice. Of course, it has legal and financial aspects, too, but above all it is a moral quest. It resonates with right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice.

The legal strength of quests like this depends on their moral force, not the other way around. In the case of the class suit of the torture victims of martial law, the law has become the ultimate arbiter of moral soundness, the scale upon which everything is weighed. Somehow you wonder, however the compensation turns out, however the courts judge partially or impartially, if Marcos isn't laughing beyond the grave, his favorite preoccupation of containing life in neat legal boxes finding loud echoes in all this.

Justice demands compensation, not compensation justice. You put the cart before the horse, you'll never move.

$1B Marcos deposit in Liechenstein?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AMONG THE important contributions of Jovito Salonga, the first chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, is his ability to put pertinent matters regarding the Marcos wealth in perspective. In a recent article, he noted the Feb. 5, 2005 decision of the San Francisco (California)-based 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals which strengthened the November 2003 final decision of the Philippine Supreme Court adjudicating the US$687-million Swiss deposits of Ferdinand Marcos in favor of the Republic of the Philippines. In fact, he argued, that the US CCA decision became moot and academic after the SC's November decision.

He also noted the December 1997 decision of the Swiss Federal Supreme Court, which awarded the deposits to RP, stressing that there is no connection between Marcos' graft and corruption (the basis of Switzerland's move freezing the assets in that country) and the claims of the human rights victims. Salonga also recalled that then presidential candidate Imelda Marcos had claimed on March 27, 1998 that "there's more Marcos wealth that this government is not yet aware of" and that about $800 million of such wealth is stashed away "in various international banks." Imelda's admission, he said, was bolstered by the May 2002 revelation of a Canadian-Welsh lawyer, then working for a Swiss firm, that on the eve of the March 1986 freeze of the Marcos Swiss deposits, the Marcoses and their agents were able to secretly withdraw at least $400 million of the Marcos deposits and transferred it to a Liechenstein subsidiary. The lawyer theorized that this amount must have doubled by now due to interests, thus tallying with Imelda's admission of the $800 million in 1998.

The buzz in international finance circles is that a huge Marcos deposit in the vicinity of $1 billion has been found in Liechenstein. Salonga doubtless must be thinking of that loot when he coaxed Imelda, saying that the "best way to (show support for the Arroyo administration), help the human rights victims and the whole nation, is for the Marcos family to now voluntarily return the wealth of our people." The alternative, he said, "might be disgraceful." Such as to be confronted with $1 billion in Liechenstein?

* * *

Last Monday evening, a big crowd was treated by US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone to the first-ever showing of Miramax Films' "The Great Raid" in Makati City. The movie, which kept us all riveted to our seats, is based on a true-story. On Jan. 25 to 31, 1945, the US 6th Ranger Battalion, under the command of West Pointer Lt. Col. Henry Mucci, undertook a daring mission to penetrate deep into enemy lines to liberate over 500 American prisoners of war from a notorious Cabanatuan Japanese POW camp. It was a race against time amid reports that the Japanese, desperate in the face of MacArthur's advancing columns, were out to butcher the POWs, just as they have done in a Palawan camp.

* * *

The movie billed the raid as "the most audacious and successful raid in the annals of the US military." While the glory of success belonged to the US forces, it was acknowledged by the US ambassador, Hampton Sides, the author of one of two books on which the screenplay was based, and producer Marty Katz, that it could not have been possible without the gallant cooperation of Filipino guerrilla units in Central Luzon and the brave people of Nueva Ecija, who mobilized 50 carabao-pulled carts on which the sick and weakened POWs were loaded. Filipino actor Cesar Montano portrayed one of the two Pinoy captains who helped in the raid and blasted the bridge leading to the camp. I hope this leads to bigger international roles for him.

* * *

Ricciardone, who was also celebrating his birthday that evening, explained that the special screening was made possible through the efforts of several parties, including Miramax itself and the Ayala Group led by Jaime Zobel de Ayala. But for the movie premiere, the 60th anniversary of that daring raid would have come and gone without most of us ever hearing about it. As I watched the film (which included a remarkable reproduction of old Manila, complete with the *tranvia*), I felt rather sad that the 60th anniversary of that raid, as well as of the Liberation of Manila this month, came and went without much ado.

* * *

Recall that June 2004 was the 60th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy. There was a great celebration by the Allied nations, and for the first time the German prime minister was in attendance. In contrast, there wasn't much importance attached to the significant events in the Pacific Theater of 60 years ago.

But the 60th anniversary would have been a great way to kill many birds with one stone, so to speak. For one thing, recalling the heroism of Filipino and American defenders could have helped revive the nationalistic spirit among those old enough to remember the war, or inculcate it among young Filipinos. It could have played up the "historic ties" between the Americans and Filipinos who fought side by side in World War II. (As an added highlight for the movie, a Filipino guerrilla in that "Great Raid," named Jongo, now 84 years old, was presented by the US Embassy.) It could have drummed up tourism by inviting families of US veterans. Ignoring the events of 1945 was a big failure of the government information agency and its tourism arm—and the biggest losers were the Filipinos.

* * *

Last Saturday I plugged the Valentine weekend special to be conducted by the Retrouvaille healing ministry for ailing marriages, to be held in Tagaytay under the spiritual guidance of Columban Fr. Dave Clay. Unfortunately the weekend program has to be postponed to Feb. 25-27 due to unforeseen circumstances.

Spirituality and nation building

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"NEVER mind, we're topnotchers *naman* in spirituality, NGOs and deuterium deposits."

That was the comment of Butch Perez on Juan Mercado's column piece last Jan. 13, titled "Cellar status," which was posted in the plaridel e-group. Mercado had bewailed the Filipino students' lack of proficiency in math thus: "So when do we scramble out of this cellar?...Jammed between Morocco and Botswana, our kids limped in putting our country at No. 41 among 45 countries in math."

Perez's one-liner gave me an *aray* moment, but it made me laugh because of its sheer sarcasm. Aren't we tops *din* in jeepney mudguard epigrams?

Seriously now, spirituality—the deeply rooted and enriching variety—is no laughing matter. In the recent Karangalan National Conference/Festival, which had for its theme, "Mobilizing Excellence to Create a Visionary Philippines," the subject of spirituality was discussed.

Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, prioress of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in the Philippines spoke on "The Role of Spirituality in Nation-Building." She began by noting that a lot was said about the different kinds of energy—economic, political and cultural—needed to re-create the country, as well as the natural energies that must be harnessed. But, she stressed, "I believe one of the most untapped resources of human kind is spiritual energy and yet no nation building can succeed without it." Spiritual energy, she said, is the mother lode and the most powerful of all energies. It is the most available energy for it is around and in us. It is inexhaustible, that is, the more we use it, the greater it becomes.

It goes by different names in different traditions. *Shakti-kundalini* for the Hindus; *chi* for the Buddhists; *tao* for the Taoists and the Holy Spirit in the Christian tradition. It is the life force, the divine life, the spiritual principle.

I have myself noticed that people sometimes confuse spirituality with religiosity or even with pietistic rituals. Reciting novenas to a dozen saints or memorizing a thousand verses from holy scriptures, per se, does not mean you are holy in the eyes of the God whose name you invoke. And such practices, if you ask me, are not entirely what spirituality is all about.

Mananzan presented Hindu spiritual teacher Sri Aurobindo's take on what spirituality is not: "Spirituality is not a high intellectuality or idealism; it is not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity. It is not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervor and not even a compound of these excellent things. It is not a mental belief, creed or faith; it is not an emotional aspiration, a regulation of conduct according to a religious or ethical formula; it is not spiritual achievement and experience."

Spirituality, Mananzan stressed, is, in its essence "an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than the mind, life and body. It is an inner inspiration to know, to feel...to enter into contact with the greater Reality behind and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being.

"It is to be in communion with it and in union with it. It is a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union. It is a growth. It is a waking into a new becoming or new being, new self, new nature."

I have found a great working definition of spirituality which I needed for a book being prepared. This came from noted theologian Fr. Percy Bacani of the Missionaries of Jesus: "Spirituality is expressed in everything we do. It is a style, unique to the self, that catches up all our attitudes: in communal and personal prayer, in behavior, bodily expressions, life choices, in what we support and affirm and what we protest and deny. As our deepest self in relation to God, to the whole, and so literally in everything, spirituality changes, grows, or diminishes in the whole context of life.

"Consciously cultivated, nourished, cared about, it often takes the character of struggle as we strive to integrate new perceptions or convictions. And it bears the character of grace as we are lifted beyond previous levels of integration by a power greater than our own.

"Spirituality is deeply informed by family, teachers, friends, community, class, race, culture, sex, by our time in history, just as it is influenced by beliefs, intellectual positions and moral options. These influences may be unconscious or made explicit through reading, reflection, conversation, even conversion. And so spirituality includes and is expressed in our self-conscious or critical appraisal of our situation in time, in history and in culture."

Enriching one's spiritual life, Mananzan said, means building a core of beliefs, values and attitudes from which fundamental decisions and choices spring. Of course, this must bear fruit and face external challenges on the ground such as economic injustice, the woman question, the environmental crisis, fundamentalism and religious intolerance, the culture of violence. How do we respond?

And so Mananzan spoke of "transforming spirituality." One that is affirming and mutually empowering, integrating and liberating. It is prophetic, it announces the good news and denounces the bad. It is contemplative, that is, it draws from stillness and solitude and is attuned to the present. It is healing and compassionate. And of course, yes, of course, it celebrates.

To Chinese-Filipinos who have enriched this country, Happy New Year of the Rooster. *Shuey e*, or better still, *Kampei*!

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Threads of life

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

OUR lives are composed of stories and experiences, threads that are stitched together with the threads of other lives to form the tapestry of human experience. As a child, I met once or twice a large, lumbering man with a mane of shaggy white hair, whom I was solemnly instructed to call "Uncle Korneld." Close family friendship in Filipino society bestows the honorific of uncle or aunt on such people. Uncle Ernest Korneld was an architect, and as I found out only later, when he died, a Jew—one of the 1,200 Jews who fled Nazi persecution and found refuge in the Philippines.

A little later on in my life, I met one of my father's oldest friends, Harry Brauer, a distinguished judge from California. Again, I was told to call him "Uncle," and we even visited him a few times in the United States. When my father passed away in 1998, Uncle Harry wrote me a very kind letter, even sending me copies of their youthful correspondence, adding several new and soul-strengthening stitches to my tapestry of life.

For much of life, Uncles Korneld and Harry were the only Jews I'd ever known, although it seemed to me that Jews had some sort of special place in our family's tapestry of experiences, among them a man my father called "Uncle Jake." I later found out that he was a businessman named Jacob Rosenthal, and one of the dearest and closest friends my grandfather had in the American community. Rosenthal was famous for his jokes, and if there is one thing that anyone immediately realizes, it is the Filipino propensity for humor. Whether self-deprecating, or irreverent, Filipino humor enables us to survive even the grimmest of situations, and this is, perhaps, something that we, as a people, share with the Jews.

I did not know, though, the stories behind the lives of Ernest Korneld or Harry Brauer, until I caught a few episodes of "The World at War," a British documentary on World War II narrated by Sir Laurence Olivier. At one point, I said something complimentary about the Reichswehr, the army of Nazi Germany, and my father turned to me, quite irate, and proceeded to scold me. He said that as far as Hitler was concerned, I was "nothing but a brown monkey" and the sooner I realized the hideousness of Nazi ideology, the better. I must have been in the third grade when he scolded me, and it seems to me that after that my father went out of his way to remind me that any tendency to romanticize Nazism was an expression of perverted thought. My father was a student of philosophy, and knew the dangers posed to impressionable minds by the pomp and glitter of hateful ways of thinking.

I grew up at a time when Philippine society was wrestling with its own collaboration with dictatorship and repression. I recall a time when people were careful about what they said over the telephone or what they expressed about current events in public. Within my own family, I witnessed the different ways people chose to react to arbitrary arrests, to propaganda, to fears: the kind that can be pervasive and corrosive to even the well-meaning.

To live under such a system, for the thinking person at least, cannot fail to inspire a search for answers. Why do people submit to what is wrong? Why do normally good, decent people, bow down to what they have been taught, and continue to say, should not be? Why do the many support the ruthless few? Is redemption for such a society possible?

Because of its prominence, our family was insulated from the worst effects of the dictatorship, but it was not immune to soul-searching. From the start, neither my father nor his sister viewed the dictatorship as legitimate. In their own way, each resisted, though my father was passive in his resistance and my aunt was active in hers. Each was sincere, but at times, I found it confusing. I found my answers on my own, by studying the very thing my father had so fiercely denounced: Hitlerism. It was then that the threads were woven into a greater tapestry, the suffering of other peoples and lands under totalitarianism, with its abominable, racist attempt at a "Final Solution."

By then, Uncles Korneld and Harry were not just family friends, but witnesses to the horrors of Nazism and yet fortunate in having escaped the worst. Having found refuge in Manila, they had to live through truly awful times, but were spared from being transported for liquidation in the concentration camps.

I was in my 20s when my father told me something Uncle Harry once solemnly said to him: "If it hadn't been for your father, I would have become a bar of soap." As a contemporary Filipino, I know that the past of my country is filled with the stories of exiles and repression, but in its history are also stories of standing up against tyranny and for the cause of humanity. My grandfather's role in our history is one susceptible to many interpretations, but on one count the verdict must be clear. At a time when the League of Nations had shut its members' doors to Jewish immigration and even the United States would not permit the entry of Jewish refugees, one country, not even independent, opened its arms in welcome to the Jews. There were surely political considerations in my grandfather's decision to admit Jewish refugees to the Philippines, but at the point when he lent some of his own land to give some of them a home, I believe the only consideration could have been his sense of humanity.

It is a sense that permeates us as a people. And as I travel to Cincinnati, Ohio to meet some of those who made it to Manila and their descendants, it humbles me. It fills me with pride as well as with thankfulness. Pride in my grandfather, and thankfulness that he was in a position to prove, that not all politicians are bereft of humanity. In the threads of my family's tapestry, there are threads of life that bind us to 1,200 individuals. Those threads are more precious to us than cloth of gold.

The stalker

YOUNG BLOOD

Angeleyes

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I HAVE been stalking him for almost a year now. I've been looking up his schedule and following him around. I have spent many times sitting near him, but far enough so he wouldn't notice, and I would just stare at his face for hours. I've been writing his name at the back of my notebook, on my palm, on tables and tablecloths, on almost anything you can imagine. But everything must come to an end.

I first saw him some time in the first quarter of the year 2003. I overheard a group of girls giggling and swooning over someone named Jay. They said he was gorgeous, extremely nice, a dean's lister who had been sent to other countries for competition and, on top of it all, he was humble.

Then a guy passed by, I knew right away that he was the one they were talking about. He had a very pleasant face, a face that seemed to exude happiness and calm.

It was not love at first sight—I'm too old for that. And I'm no girl, I'm a woman who makes the move. The next day, I got his cell phone number.

I spent hours thinking of what to text him. It should be catchy, different, something that would interest him. So I texted him: "What can you say about girls making the first move?"

But girls and flirting don't seem to interest him at all. I should have known better, given that he is into math, science and religion.

After months of sending him quotes and picture messages, he finally replied to a Legolas picture message. He asked me who I was. He was being nice, and that was it.

I was disappointed but I didn't stop texting him. I was a year ahead of him and I would ask him if he needed books or help with his subjects. I even offered to help him with electromagnetics. The nerve! Me offering help to a candidate for Mensa International.

I called him on his phone, and our conversation lasted five minutes or so. I was simply nervous and sweating like hell. I couldn't remember what we talked about, but after that call I wore a happy smile for days.

This went on for months, until one time he asked for a meeting in, of all places, our school's study area (his only hang-out). I told him it would be nicer if we could have lunch, and we ended agreeing to meet at the school's PE hall.

I made sure I looked my best. I put on a little makeup and perfume. I was thinking about lots of stuff. What comes after this? What is he expecting? Would he like me?

He came in a blue shirt. He walked toward me, smiled and said, "So, it was you." We shook hands and I tried to put up a poker face while my heart was doing somersaults and jumping jacks.

Like our first phone conversation our meeting was brief, but for days afterwards I had the look of a girl in love. And yet I felt shy. We would often cross paths in the corridor and I would avoid meeting his eyes. I could no longer stare at him. I realized I could not be a stalker anymore.

I had always been on the other side—being stalked and stared at. Guys would come up to me and introduce themselves. But he is no ordinary guy. He never took advantage of the girls who like him. He never said he wanted to get in my pants and it made me admire him more. Now, should I feel sorry for that?

He is my elusive dream, my greatest challenge, my only defeat in the game of love. He is unattainable. And I must end this craziness. Because for him, I will always remain a stalker, and I will never be more than that.

Angeleyes, 20, is a fourth year BS Computer Engineering student at the Technological Institute of the Philippines.

To Russ

Mameha

HI. It's me.

Remember? I've always been your fan. I love your drawings, and I let you know it. Remember how I kept pestering you to draw me something, anything? I want you to know I've kept all of them. Especially your caricature of me. I never thought I could look so cute!

Remember? I've always been your audience. I loved listening to your anecdotes and jokes. Even a single word sent me to convulsions. And the way you kept a straight face added to the hilarity. I wouldn't have known this side of you if I hadn't taken a closer look. I never thought I would like what I saw.

Remember? Sometimes we'd just find ourselves sitting side by side in the classroom. We'd slouch over our chairs and observe the people, and let time fly. Then we'd smile. Sometimes I'd sing and you'd listen. Or you'd draw, and I'd watch. And then we'd talk, and talk until the teacher noticed that we're not in our proper sitting arrangements, and order us back to our assigned seats. I never thought I would risk getting demerits just so I could sit beside you.

Remember? Sometimes we'd just find ourselves looking at each other. And then I'd break into a smile, and you'd smile back. Remember how you were almost punished during CAT because you smiled back at me. You were not supposed to do that especially since you were an officer. I never thought I'd miss your smile when a whole day passed without me seeing you.

Remember? When we had nothing to do, I'd just talk, and you'd listen. I would tell you everything that came to my mind—my fears, my opinions, my dreams, the weather. You never laughed. You understood. Even when I talked about the most mundane thing, the most absurd topics, you were there to listen. And in the end, I'd laugh, and you'd laugh with me.

Then we just drifted apart. Maybe we just got busy with our friends. Maybe we just got busy with our lives. We didn't even get to talk during our graduation ball. Up to now I haven't said my goodbye. I feel like I'm not yet done with high school.

And do you know what bothers me most? I lied. I haven't told you everything. And now I want to tell you: I love you. I don't know how, or when, or why, I just do.

When I see you smile, my heart wishes that you are mine, that it means you are feeling something deep inside. Every time I see your picture, I hate you for making me love you, and I hate myself for loving you.

I am a bunch of contradictions. And it hurts. It hurts when I see you, and it hurts more when I don't. But what hurts most is knowing that, even if I were to see you every moment of my life, you would still not be mine.

I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner. I guess I was afraid. But now it doesn't matter.

Thank you for the jokes, for the talks, for the drawings. Thank you for the smile that I'll never ever forget.

I know I can move forward, that I can love you maybe until forever, and it won't hurt much even if it is not reciprocated.

No need to answer this letter. In fact, I'd rather you don't.

I love you, Russ.

Goodbye.

Mameha, 19, is a computer science student at Our Lady of Fatima University.

Remembering the FQS

WHO cares to remember what happened 35 years ago (Jan. 26-30, 1970), when the so-called First Quarter Storm (FQS) broke out? Not many, I suppose, including former student activists in their 50s.

Wide-eyed recruits to national democratic front organizations in the '70s were often treated to the story of the foolish old man who started leveling the mountains that blocked his view of the sun from his house.

Ridiculed and laughed at by his neighbors because of his puny tools—a spade and a pick-ax—he solemnly declared: "I may not live long enough to see these mountains leveled, but my children, my grandchildren and the generation after them shall continue until they finish the job."

Many of us who survived the martial law era have gone different ways. Some went to the opposite side, becoming the detractors and tormentors of those who have persisted in the struggle. Many now lead comfortable lives in their chosen professions or in influential positions.

Those who gave their lives for the cause are now mostly forgotten, unfortunately replaced by cinema heroes and television idols.

There are still, however, "foolish old men" persisting in the struggle for national freedom and democracy. Fortunately, the generations after the '70s continue to have "children and grandchildren" who continue the work after them.

In my mid-50s and no longer active politically, I can only reminisce, saddened by those who fell along the way, but gladdened by the younger forces of genuine change who have taken over from my generation and who continue the struggle in the streets, the campuses or elsewhere, even in the mountains.

No matter how small or insignificant my contribution was then, I took part in the FQS and I am proud enough to remember it even in my lonesome heart. How foolish am I growing to be an old man!

—ARCHIMEDES S. MARQUEZ,
420 Gov. A. Pascual St.,
San Jose, Navotas, MM

DBP on Steelcorp's plant in Batangas

THE NEWS item titled "Firm found operating acid plant without permit" (PDI, 1/19/05) reported that the acid regeneration plant of Steel Corporation of the Philippines (Steelcorp) has no environmental clearance certificate and was overpriced at P500 million; and that the release of a P15-million fund was facilitated by a high-ranking officer of the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Allow us to clarify the following:

1. The DBP approved a P400-million loan facility, not P500 million, to partially finance the installation of pollution control equipment and facilities at Steelcorp's integrated steel plant in Balayan, Batangas.

2. The project was financed by the DBP through its Environmental Infrastructure Support Credit Program (EISCP), a facility for pollution control projects, funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

3. Steelcorp holds an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC-246-BA-120-96) issued on June 4, 1996 by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. It likewise holds a valid Permit to Operate, also issued by the DENR, which is valid up to Feb. 28, 2005, renewable annually.

4. The acid regeneration plant, one of several waste and pollution control facilities, is an integral part of the entire plant (not an expansion project). It prevents the discharge of hazardous, acidic waste into the environment.

Steelcorp has been faithfully complying with the regulatory requirements of the DENR and with the standards set for wastewater effluent and air emissions. The company has been furnishing the DBP with the required quarterly reports from its pollution control officer, as well as hazardous waste generation reports.

The DENR, specifically Region 4-A, has provided the DBP with a copy of the latest air quality monitoring conducted at the plant's boiler on Sept. 13-14, 2004. The results showed compliance with air emissions under the Clean Air Act standards. These are used by the DENR as basis for renewing the company's Permit to Operate.

5. For the record, the DBP follows a very stringent process on loan approvals and releases, thus ensuring that all transactions are transparent and aboveboard. The decision-making process is collegial; no sole authority can decide on any matter within the credit process. Also in place is a system that will not tolerate or allow any officer to influence the credit process to favor certain interests or clients.

—LEONORA A. FERNANDEZ,
vice president and head,
Corporate Affairs,
Development Bank
of the Philippines,
info@devbankphil.com.ph

MY story was based on the reaction of Batangas government officials, including the provincial environment officer, who were shocked by the discovery that the acid regeneration plant had already been operating for so many years without their knowing it. The information on the overprice and the release of a P15-million fund came from a DBP insider whom we cannot identify under Republic Act 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees). The other related information came from another DBP employee whose name was mentioned in the story.

—MEI MAGSINO-LUBIS,
correspondent,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

VAT not meant to benefit Filipinos

FIAN-PHILIPPINES is strongly appealing to our senators not to pass the proposed hike of 2-percentage points in the Value Added Tax as it would aggravate the economic condition of many marginalized sectors. According to the Asian Development Bank, there are 12 million Filipinos subsisting on less than $1 a day. These are the people who cannot afford another increase in food prices.

What is so repulsive about the VAT is that it exempts other entities which could otherwise afford to pay, such as the independent power producers. These IPPs, according to Sen. Ralph Recto, pay a measly 3-percent tax on their gross sales, while teachers are burdened more.

Moreover, the government is pushing for the VAT increase not because it wants to provide more basic services but primarily to raise additional revenues for debt payments. This is one major reason why people are very reluctant to agree to the proposed tax measures of President Macapagal-Arroyo. We all know they're not going to benefit us.

We hope our senators would not be swayed by the promises of position, projects or funds dangled by the executive branch.

—RAFFY REY HIPOLITO,
policy advocacy officer,
FoodFirst Information
& Action Network,
2149-B Fidel Reyes St.,
Malate, Manila

Unfair to 'Unificationists'

WE take exception to the news report, "Filipinas warned against marrying Korean 'Moonies'" (PDI, 1/24/05) which sensationalized a press release of the Department of Foreign Affairs unfairly portraying the Unification Church as engaged in the trafficking of Filipino women.

The Unification Church is not into luring Filipino women into marrying Korean "Unificationists." Our practice of interracial marriage strictly applies to our members. Marriage takes place only after would-be couples successfully pass a process of thorough counseling on the responsibilities of marriage and raising a family. Marriage among races is seen by our faith as a key to promoting world peace and unity. In this spirit, our Filipino members (male and female) have been blessed in marriage to other nationals who are not necessarily Koreans.

Secondly, members of our congregation who travel to South Korea comply with all government requirements and procedures. They are properly and legally documented. They get their visas through the Korean Embassy in Manila. When they leave, they are sent off by church members, and when they arrive in Seoul they are met by church members. Our congregation would never be involved in the illegal entry of Filipinas to Korea.

Records show that the businesses apprehended for illegal practices are in no way connected with our church. Upon learning that some Filipino Unificationists married to Koreans tried to arrange similar marriages for their relatives without our knowledge, we reported this to Filipino authorities for proper action.

Third, not one of the Filipina Unificationists who have gone to Korea have wound up in nightclubs. We can say proudly that Filipino-Korean marriages in our church have a 90-percent success rate, well above the norm for marriages in Korea and elsewhere. This is because aside from taking care of preparing our members for marriage, our church also assists as a community in helping them build their families. We are ready to cooperate with the Philippine Embassy in Korea if it wants to meet with Filipino-Korean families to verify this.

Fourth, we protest the use of the term "Moonies" to refer to Unificationists. This word of ridicule has rightly been judged in the United States and elsewhere as bigoted, prejudicial and injurious to our religious rights.

Finally, the Unification Church is engaged in many worthwhile activities and programs. It enjoys a position of respect in many parts of the world. Besides practicing our faith, we actively foster understanding among all religious congregations, promote peace in divided regions like the Middle East, strengthen the family as an institution, and stand up in the fight against drugs and HIV. Many of the top political, religious and civic leaders can attest to the integrity of our organization.

—DR. MICHAEL G. ZABLAN,
president,
Holy Spirit Association for the
Unification of World Christianity,
32 Samar Avenue,
South Triangle,
Diliman, Quezon City

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LOVE TEAMS, FOREVER
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nina Maricel-William, Janno-Manilyn, Mark-Jennilyn

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

Tagaytay feasts on love, thanksgiving

By Mei Magsino-Lubis
Tagaytay City

WHEN the Marcos regime was building the Palace in the Sky on Mt. Gonzales in Barangay Dapdap, Tagaytay City in 1981, construction workers tried to blast the stone mountain with dynamite but failed.

According to local residents, the workers stopped clearing the place when they found a woman's statue. Instead, they put up a shrine for the Our Lady of Fair Love on the mountain peak, the highest point in Tagaytay (823 meters above sea level).

The residents believe that the shrine is watching over and protecting the city, known for its breathtaking and spectacular view of Taal Volcano and its cool fresh air.

"Every time Taal Volcano erupts, only the volcano island and Talisay town are affected," said city public information officer Lani Diesta.

Bigger tourism arrivals

"While news about the eruptions spreads, we get bigger tourism arrivals because the [visitors] want to see the erupting volcano, which is really a beauty to behold," she said.

For that natural wonder, Tagaytay will celebrate its thanksgiving on Feb. 12-14. The event coincides with Valentine's Day and the feast day of the Our Lady of Fair Love.

The shrine's image is one of only two pieces in the world. The original piece is in Navarre, Spain, where it is known as the patron saint of lovers. The Philippines has the replica which was brought by the Salesian brothers in December 1974.

Second time

Tagaytay is holding the festival for the second time. Last year, the celebration was made simple in order to avoid politicking by election candidates who were campaigning then.

Mayor Abraham Tolentino had wanted to have just one fiesta for the whole city, Diesta said. Tagaytay's two parishes, Lourdes and Perpetual Help, celebrate separate fiestas on Feb. 11 and June 27, respectively.

The lavish celebrations were too much for households, the city official said. On Dec. 1, 2003, the city council passed an ordinance designating Feb. 14 as Thanksgiving Day.

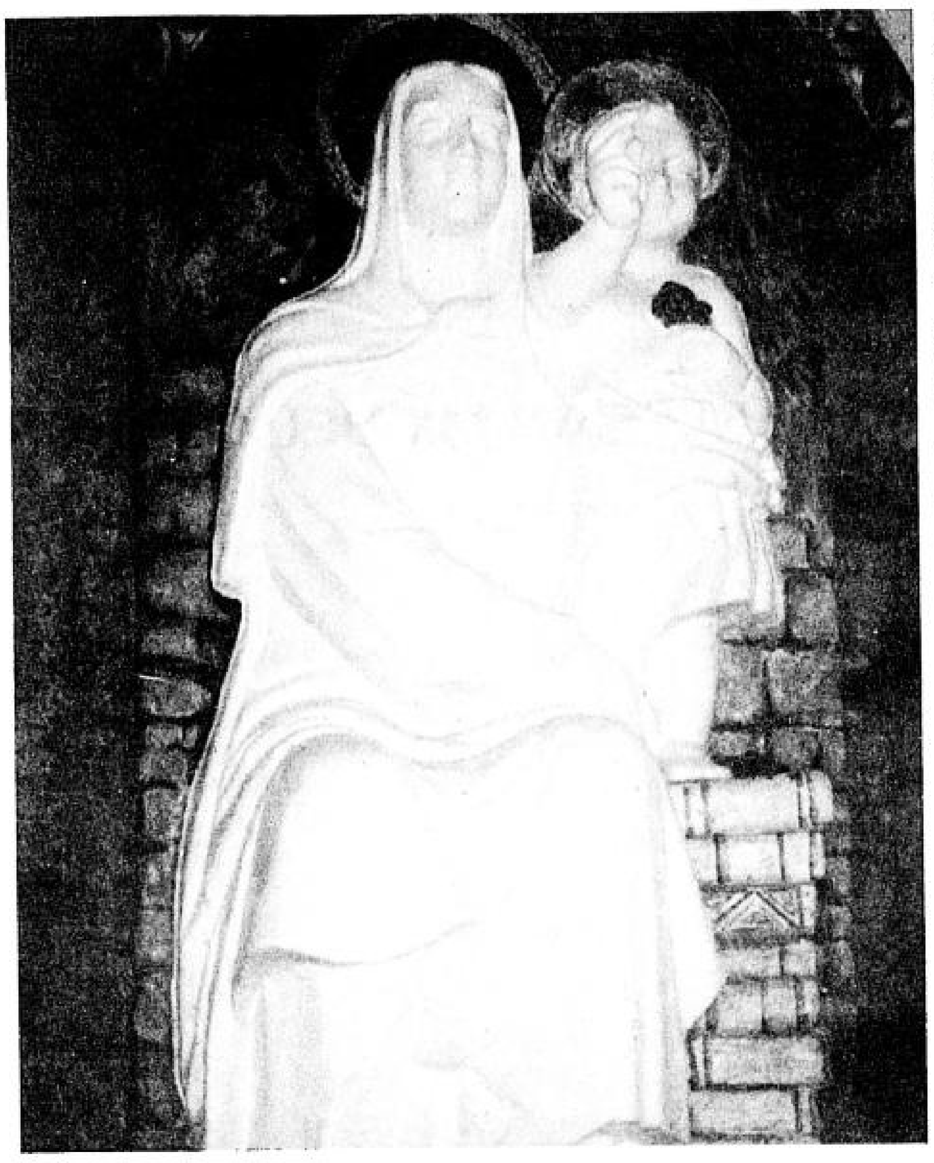
"The Lady of Fair Love is our unifying symbol in celebrating thanksgiving. And her feast day is Feb. 14, which is a good timing for our love festival," she said.

But she clarified that the Our Lady of Fair Love is not the patron saint of Tagaytay.

Tagaytay, according to Diesta, has no old cultural tradition, like the Sinulog of Cebu, because most of the people in the chartered city are migrants.

"And since this is the City of Character, with the Our Lady of Fair Love looking after us, we chose to celebrate the festival on the Lady's feast day, Valentine's Day."

This year's celebration will culminate with the Thanksgiving Mass on Feb. 14, after the walk to the shrine.



THE SHRINE of the Our Lady of Fair Love on Mt. Gonzales, the highest point in Tagaytay City.
MEI MAGSINO-LUBIS

3 days

Diesta said the activities would include a mountain bike challenge, marathon race, boxing, band exhibition, Ms Gay competition, Little Darlings of Tagaytay, singing contest for drivers, and a dance group contest.

A street party, fireworks display, and awarding of housing units to City Hall employees and poor families will also be held, she said.

Yolanda Marasigan, president of the Tagaytay Tourism Council, said 98 percent of all the restaurants and hotels would give 10-30 percent discounts.

A different kind of love

On Feb. 13, the Brahma Kumaris Center for Spiritual Learning at 1020 Magallanes Drive will have a forum that, it hopes, will enable participants to understand how certain types of fear stop people from loving.

The next day, it will host a "spiritual fiesta" called "Tipanan," which will feature games, face painting, meditation, books and compact disks. There will also be video showing and talks on positive thinking and everyday spirituality.

A discussion on "Food and Soul" is also scheduled on the same day, when plant-based dishes will be served.

"It's the only love festival in the Philippines and we're inviting everybody to come up to Tagaytay to celebrate a very unique and romantic Valentine's Day here," Diesta said.

'A tsunami of humanitarian gestures'

By Delfin Mallari Jr.
Lucena City

DESPITE the loss of a worker while helping prepare relief goods for calamity victims in northern Quezon, the host of a local cable television program has launched another campaign of assistance, riding on human generosity, especially during this season of the hearts.

"With the generous response of Quezonians from all walks of life in our previous campaign drive, we decided to once more tap their generosity in time for Valentine's," said Arnel Avila, host of "Pag-usapan Natin," a daily program aired over STV6 and dwLT-AM in Lucena City.

The solicitation campaign, dubbed "Ialay ang Puso Para sa Reina (Real-Infanta-General Nakar)" started last month, courtesy of STV6, a cable TV station owned and operated by Asian Vision Cable Holdings Inc.

Avila said he was still overwhelmed by the flood of donations of assorted relief goods—rice, canned goods, clothes and blankets, among many other items.

Stream of donations

"I did not expect the heartwarming response from my listeners. This only proves that STV6, despite being a small entity, has the power of media in generating support for a worthy endeavor," he said.

"No amount of relief goods will be enough for the continuous sufferings of typhoon victims. Now that government resources are dwindling, the private sector should continue to chip in to keep the donations coming for the sake of the poor victims."

The local government units in the Reina area, through their social welfare offices, have been implementing the food-for-work program in landslide-hit areas because of the dwindling stocks of relief goods.

Avila recalled that during the first days of their earlier relief campaign after the series of typhoons struck late last year, the bulk of donations from civic groups, concerned individuals and government agencies occupied almost every area of the cable TV station's newly constructed studio compound in University Site in Barangay Ibabang Dupay.

Avila said his program was able to gather at least six truckloads of assorted relief goods donated by listeners last December.

Peso coins

It was a "tsunami of humanitarian gestures," he said in describing the public response to his plea.

He recalled how the teachers from Lucena West III Elementary School brought to the TV station P2,990 in peso coins that were contributed by the students.

"They told me that the one-peso campaign drive was spearheaded by the students themselves without prodding from the teacher. Even Grade 1 pupils contributed. That information helped open the floodgates for more donations," Avila said.

A group of Quezon policemen, police trainees from the Regional Police Training School in Camp Nakar and civilian volunteers helped in the preparation of the relief goods. Quezon Rep. Proceso Alcala shouldered the cost of ferrying the relief goods from Atimonan port to Real town.

Avila said his program was able to collect about P1 million worth of assorted relief goods.

Provincial Board Member Kelly Portes shouldered the payment for the cargo trucks.

For transparency, Avila published the complete list of donors and their donations in the centerfold of one issue of "Ang Diaryo Natin," a local weekly newspaper.

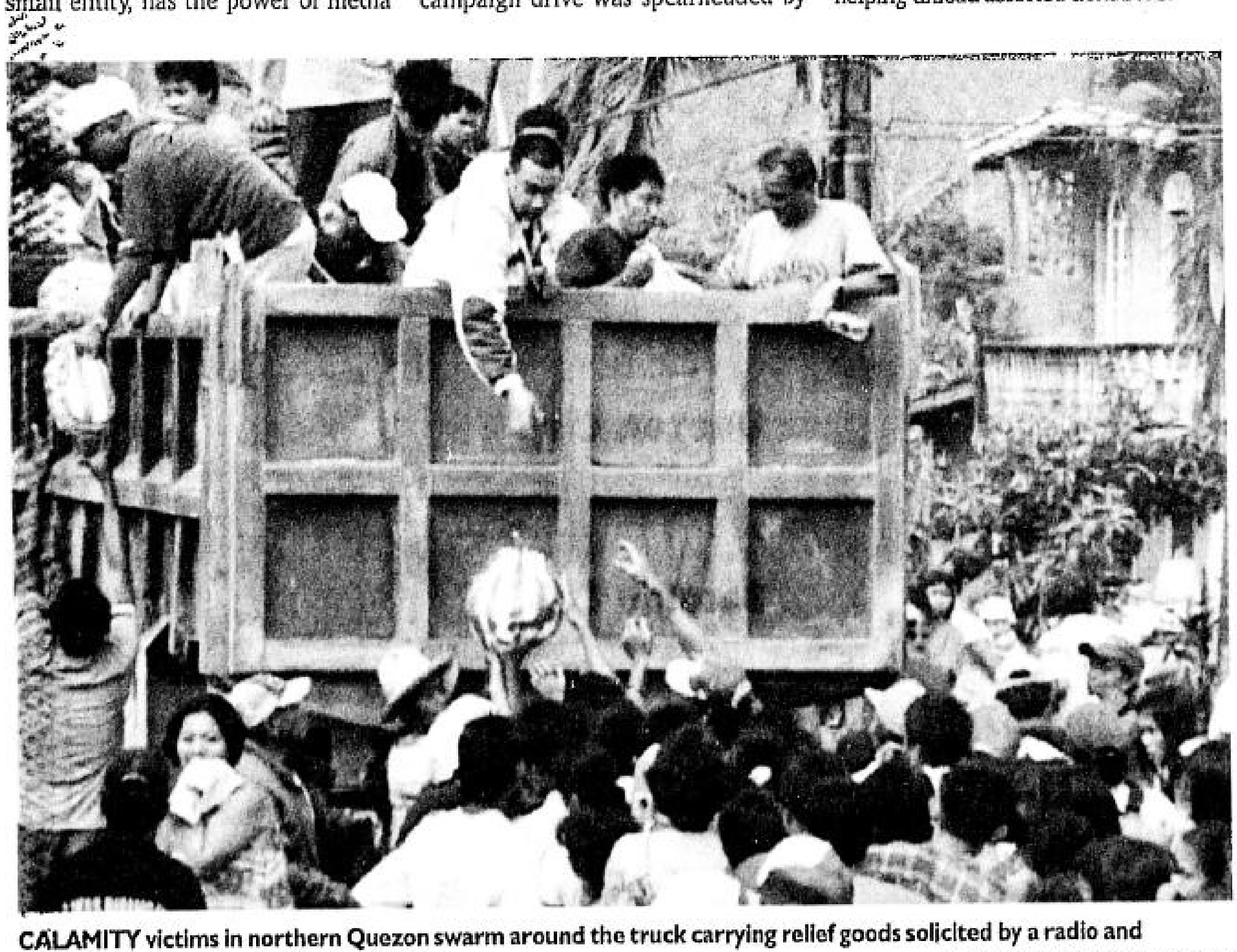
Sharing on Valentine's

Avila said they would bring the relief goods to northern Quezon on Feb. 14, Valentine's Day.

"We want to share with the calamity victims the genuine concern of a Quezonian to a fellow Quezonian in distress on that very special day," he said.

The death of Rolando Catausan, a fellow television worker, had inspired all the station personnel to strive for the success of the solicitation drive.

Catausan, a television technician, suffered a fatal heart attack on Dec. 8 while helping unload assorted donations.



CALAMITY victims in northern Quezon swarm around the truck carrying relief goods solicited by a radio and television program hosted by Arnel Avila.
PHOTO COURTESY OF STV6-LUCENA CITY

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DENR cancels forest permit of ex-mayor's cooperative

BACOLOD CITY—Environment Secretary Michael Defensor cancelled the controversial forest management agreement in Don Salvador Benedicto that was granted to a group led by the former mayor of the town during the Estrada administration.

Defensor found that the Community Based Forest Management Agreement awarded to Sibalao Agro-Forestry Development Association Inc. (Safdai), covering 350 hectares in Barangays Kumaliskis and Bunga in Don Salvador Benedicto, was irregular.

Safdai was organized by former Don Salvador Benedicto Mayor Nehemias de la Cruz Sr. and his children—Nehemias de la Cruz Jr., Don Salvador Benedicto Vice Mayor Marxlin de la Cruz and Shalom de la Cruz and other partners.

The Community Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) was awarded to Safdai by then Environment Secretary Antonio Cerilles on July 20, 2000.

But Defensor said investigators learned not only that 36 out of 39 Safdai members were not actual tillers of the forested area, but only one of the group's officers could be considered as a legitimate stakeholder.

Also, there was no evidence of joint undertakings between the DENR and the local government unit in community appraisal and organizing of the people's organization.

The agreement, Defensor said, "was signed in complete disregard of the process involved in the processing and issuance of the Community-Based Forest Management Agreement."

The CBFMA had long been opposed by residents of Kumaliskis and Bunga, particularly the forest occupants of the area, the provincial board of Negros Occidental and environmental groups in the province.

Defensor also ordered the officers and members of Safdai to vacate the area or face criminal charges in court.

He directed the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office in Negros Occidental to issue public notices that the area is now open for application for legal forestry production purposes. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Mikey washes hands of quarry scam when he was vice gov

THRICE, as the House committee on environment and natural resources began a hearing on the controversial sand revenues on Wednesday, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo stressed he had no hand in the quarry operations in Pampanga.

The eldest son of President Macapagal-Arroyo told the committee on Wednesday that the collection of quarry taxes was "purely an executive function."

Arroyo also asked that his clarifications be put on record after the committee, chaired by Agusan del Norte Rep. Leovigildo Banaag, received data showing big discrepancies in quarry revenues generated by the Natural Resources Development Corp. (NRDC) and the provincial government from 1999 to 2004.

Arroyo was the Pampanga vice governor from 2001 to 2004, during the last term of now Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid who then chaired the provincial quarry task force.

The difference amounted to P337 million, Pampanga Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao told the committee.

The hearing was ordered on the request of Pampanga Rep. Reynaldo Aquino who filed Resolution 267 that sought an inquiry into the "income-generating prospects of the Pampanga quarry industry" in the light of the national and local fiscal deficit.

Asked by the INQUIRER after the two-hour hearing why he seemed to be defensive, Arroyo said: "The media and the opposition might again put some malice in this."

"The vice governor has no power [in managing quarry collections and operations]," he said.

Also at the hearing, an angry Arroyo castigated Provincial Administrator Fidel Arcenas for lecturing congressmen on the law while he was not a lawyer.

Arcenas, the representative of Gov. Mark Lapid in the hearing, was explaining the laws that grant exclusive powers to the local government to collect taxes.

Arcenas immediately apologized.

Arcenas again found himself apologizing, this time to Banaag. He did so after he cited the illegality of Proclamation No. 66, which ousted President Joseph Estrada issued and which was the basis of the NRDC takeover of quarry operations in 1999.

Banaag asked Arcenas if it was wrong for the President to regulate local governments.

Also during the hearing, retired Lt. Gen. Victor Corpus, NRDC chair, assailed Arcenas for misleading the committee on the income raised by the NRDC.

Arcenas said he only reported the shares not the total collections because the NRDC had not furnished reports on the latter.

Arcenas and provincial lawyers Regina Guarin and Vergel Yabut found themselves ranged against Arroyo, Aquino and Pampanga Rep. Francis Nepomuceno.

Banaag asked Arcenas to advise Governor Lapid to appear in the next hearing.

The seven provincial board members who thrashed Resolution No. 1, which Guiao certified as urgent, were also invited to appear in the next hearing.

The resolution urged Lapid to enter into an agreement with the NRDC as the capitol's collecting agent for quarry taxes.

Arcenas told the committee several times that the provincial government was not opposing the NRDC proposal. There were, he pointed out, legal obstacles to the plan. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Artists help pave way for Panagbenga feast

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The next time you walk on Session Road's sidewalks, credit a volunteer group of artists here for the tile mosaic that you would step on.

On Tuesday, artists Kawayan de Guia and Kigao Rosimo led a group of artists who volunteered to repair the cracked and chipped-out portions of Session's sidewalks by covering and paving these with colorful broken tiles.

De Guia, son of filmmaker Kidlat Tahimik, said they turned the damaged portions of the sidewalks into a mosaic as their contribution to the city's preparations for the Baguio Flower Festival or Panagbenga.

He said they also volunteered to do what personnel of the city engineer's office had failed to do—repair the sidewalks' damaged portions that had tripped a number of pedestrians.

The cracks have pestered pedestrians, particularly the elderly.

Tahimik said De Guia was also victimized by the cracks and this prompted his son to pursue the project.

De Guia met with Mayor Braulio Yaranon two weeks ago and proposed his street art project on Session Road by paving the damaged portions of the sidewalks with cement and recycled tiles.

"When we spoke to Mayor Yaranon, it turned out that their office had been hearing a lot of complaints about the cracks. [Yaranon said] there was a plan to pave it and when we brought up the proposal [he allowed us to do it], the project was implemented immediately," said De Guia.

Since the city government's resources were limited, De Guia and his artist-friends pooled their money to buy cement, adhesives and broken tiles to get the Session Road Mosaic Project rolling.

De Guia said they bought the broken tiles from hardware stores for P70-P80 a box.

Later, donations for additional construction materials arrived from various construction supply stores and churches in the city.

But not all residents appreciated the artists' efforts.

They were criticized by some owners of business establishments along Session Road for supposedly obstructing the flow of their patrons.

On Friday, a resident scolded the artists for taking too long in repairing the sidewalks.

ARTISTS do their share in preparations for the Panagbenga. VINCENT CABREZA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

The resident, who coordinates a senior citizens' group in the city, was carrying a copy of a directive from Yaranon, which gave the artists only until Feb. 4 to complete the project.

De Guia managed to put up a calm face amid the criticisms.

However, he said these reactions disappointed them.

He said the artists were determined to finish what they started.

"The designs of the mosaic come out spontaneously, so what you will see are colorful tiles in different sizes, shapes and forms," De Guia said.

He said some designs would help set up the Panagbenga mood in the city following the scare brought by reports on meningococcemia, a fatal strain of meningitis, in Baguio recently.

"Instead of seeing people wearing surgical masks on Session, this time it is nicer to see artists doing something colorful. Maybe, you could call this color my steps on Session," he said.

Pampanga board seeks review of North toll

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Pampanga provincial board on Monday ordered its committee on good government to file a petition for review of the approved toll at the North Luzon Expressway before the Toll Regulatory Board.

The League of Provincial Board Members in Central Luzon was submitting a separate petition to President Macapagal-Arroyo to help stop the 400-percent increase in rates, according to Pampanga Board Member Aurelio Gonzales, the league's vice chair.

Although the TRB has approved the new rates, it has yet to announce the date on which the Manila North Tollways Corp. can start collecting these, MNTC president Jose de Jesus said.

The MNTC—a joint venture of the Lopez-family owned First Philippine Infrastructure Corp., Groupe Egis, Leighton International and the state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp.—rehabilitated and expanded the 30-year-old highway at a cost of P18.5 billion.

Spanning more than 80 km from Balintawak, Quezon City, to Sta. Ines in Mabalacat, Pampanga, it was the biggest toll road project undertaken by a private company since the 1970s.

The "open system" from Balintawak and any exit point up to Bocaue charges a flat rate of P42.

Opening rates at per kilometer for the "closed system" (Bocaue to Sta. Ines) were set at P2.48 for cars (Class 1), P6.21 for buses and light trucks (Class 2) and P7.45 for trucks and other heavy vehicles (Class 3). The strengthening of the peso in recent weeks lowered the rates by a centavo.

The PNCC, the original operator of the NLEx, used to collect P0.26, P0.52 and P0.78, respectively, for the same classes of vehicles.

Asked on Tuesday for comments on the new rounds of protest, De Jesus said: "They are within their rights to do that, and it should be directed at the TRB."

He anticipated the actual takeover of the NLEx's operations not later than Feb. 17.

De Jesus defended the new rates, saying these were derived from the P0.82 per km base toll rates approved in 1998 under the contract's Supplemental Toll Operating Agreement (Stoa).

Foreign exchange and inflation rates drove the fees up. The MNTC, he said, was not passing on to the toll the additional construction cost of around P7 billion.

In a forum here Monday, he said MNTC rates were still lower and more reasonable compared to those collected at the South Luzon Expressway. *Tonette Orejas with a report from Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

8 die in separate road accidents on NLEx

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Eight people were killed while six others were hurt in separate accidents along the North Luzon Expressway here and in Cagayan on Wednesday and Monday, respectively.

In this city, four people died instantly when a truck and a van collided at the Barangay San Jose segment of the North Luzon Expressway at 3:57 a.m. Wednesday, a report from the Philippine National Construction Corp. said.

The PNCC traffic management division identified the fatalities as Romy Gagarin, 41; Andrew Dumada, 41; Benjamin Lebing, 82; and Elsa Dumawa, 32.

The four, all from Baguio City, were passengers of an Isuzu Crosswind van.

According to the PNCC, the van was cruising along the NLEx's southbound lane when a northbound 10-wheel truck swerved to its lane.

The PNCC report said the truck driver, Freddie Mabitasan, lost control of the steering wheel. Mabitasan was arrested by members of the Traffic Management Group in Angeles City.

Three other persons were reported hurt in the accident. They were identified as Maureen Ricadio and Gilbert Dumawa, both passengers of the van, and Remy Mar, truck helper.

In Cagayan, four people were killed while one was reported missing after a pickup truck hit a tricycle in Barangay Riverside in Tuguegarao City on Monday night.

Senior Supt. Rodrigo de Gracia, Cagayan police director, identified the victims as Efren Afan, his wife Rosita, his daughter Princess, 5, and son Darwinson, 13.

Missing was Evelyn Macapia, wife of tricycle driver Norberto Macapia.

De Gracia said the Afans' pickup truck was negotiating a bridge on Pinacanauan River and hit Macapia's tricycle.

The impact caused the truck to fall into the river. The tricycle's passengers also fell off the river after the collision.

Norberto, his daughter Hazel and one Marilyn Baccay survived the accident and were taken to the People's Emergency Hospital in Tuguegarao. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Estanislao Caldez and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Glass shard found in medicine for pneumonia

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Gov. Luisa Cuaresma has ordered an investigation of the complaint of government doctors here over the integrity of low cost generic medicines being bought by the provincial government.

Cuaresma ordered the inquiry following last week's discovery of what appeared to be a glass shard (bubog) inside a sealed vial of an injectable drug.

Lawyer Desiderio Perez, executive assistant for legal affairs, said Cuaresma's order followed a complaint of Dr. Fe Agnes Rañon, chief of the provincial government-run Dupax District Hospital in Barangay Malasin, Dupax del Norte, some 25 km from here.

Rañon said a nurse found the object sealed inside a 250-mg vial of powdered hydrocortisone sodium succinate as she was about to inject the medicine in a patient suffering from chronic pneumonia.

"The presence of a foreign object in a bottle of medicine for intravenous administration and a life-saving medicine at that, reveals the kind of quality control the medicine passed [through]," Rañon said.

"It also creates doubts on the quality of the medicine especially its potency, efficacy and safety," she said.

Rañon said doctors often call hydrocortisone a wonder drug for its ability to revive patients in life-and-death situations.

The drug's label showed that it was manufactured by Samarth Pharma Pvt. Ltd. based in Bombay, India, and distributed in the Philippines by Philippine Pharmawealth Inc.

Records from the provincial general services office showed that the hydrocortisone vials were included in a single purchase of generic medicines worth P151,500 last year. Each vial costs P61.50.

The medicines were supplied by AMS Medical and Trading Inc. based in Baguio City, which submitted the lowest price quotation during the bidding, said Eileen Dacuycoy, purchasing officer.

Contacted for comment, an AMS representative referred to a letter from Rajiv Shah of Samarth Pharma to Monaliza Balnig Salian, regulatory head of Philippine Pharmawealth.

In that letter, Shah said their company has been manufacturing drugs "under strict compliance with good manufacturing practice, set [forth] by the World Health Organization."

He cited the procedures performed by its quality assurance unit, including a "sterility test to ensure that the product is free from any bacterial or fungal contamination."

"Perhaps the only logical explanation we can give is the possible chipping of the molded glass vial commonly happening in the 'mouth area' of the vial," Shah said.

He said this might have happened due to the "significant pressure and weight of the molded vials during stacking and handling process." *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Warplanes pound rebel ranks; 3,000 civilians flee

From page A1

when hundreds of rebels ambushed a convoy of soldiers in Patikul town. They also staged attacks in three other areas of Jolo.

Casualty figures

Brig. Gen. Agustin Dema-ala, chief of the military's Task Force Comet, reported yesterday that 22 soldiers had so far been killed. He also confirmed that the number of wounded soldiers had risen to 38.

"It's unavoidable. Every operation, we suffer casualty," Dema-ala said.

Southcom chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza vowed to continue the "punitive" action against Misuari's followers, who attacked several military detachments on Monday.

"Since Monday, we have lost 20 soldiers, but we killed about 40 rebels in our punitive actions," Pascual told reporters in Manila.

"We have already discovered their mass grave, that's where we get the figures," Braganza said.

Some of the slain soldiers were already brought here.

Marines commander Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga said the wounded soldiers had been brought to the V. Luna Medical Center in Metro Manila and in the military hospital here and in Sulu.

Ceasefire appeal

In an emergency meeting in Jolo, the Provincial Crisis Management Committee yesterday adopted a resolution "supporting the appeal of the concerned citizens of Sulu and Mindanao" for an immediate ceasefire.

Loong sent former Interior Secretary Abdurahman Jamasali of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to negotiate with Habier Malik's group. Jamasali left Jolo at around 2 p.m. yesterday.

Malik's force is being reinforced by followers of Julhambri Misuari, a nephew of Misuari, Dema-ala said. Julhambri led the MNLF faction that seized the Cabatangan complex in Zamboanga City in November 2001.

"Jamasali has the blessings of Chairman Nur Misuari and House Speaker Jose de Venecia," Loong said.

"We want to investigate how this whole incident started," the governor told reporters after meeting senior military commanders at an Army base near Jolo's main airport.

"I was told there were many civilian casualties in the mountain villages. Please spare them."

Land mines

The emergency meeting was held in the wake of difficulties encountered by relief groups because of dangers posed by land mines reportedly planted by the rebels.

Earlier, the local Red Cross chapter said it was having difficulty reaching evacuees in the besieged areas because of the land mines.

Pinky Chiong, Red Cross provincial administrator, said the explosives were discovered along the roads leading to the affected villages.

Some 1,300 families are scattered in various parts of Luuk, Panamao and Panlima Estino towns and most of them are running out of provisions.

Dema-ala said pressure in Lake Siit in Panamao had already eased up, but there is still strong resistance in Barangay Bitanag, also in Panamao. He put the number of the MNLF renegades in the town at 400.

Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday that another Marine battalion was dispatched from Zamboanga City to augment government forces in Sulu. This brings to around 3,000 from six battalions—three each from the Army and the Marines—the number of troops who are already on the island.

ONE of 38 wounded soldiers is loaded on a military plane at the Jolo airport on Wednesday as the gun battle between alleged Misuari followers and government troops continues to rage. The body count stands at 30 rebels and 20 soldiers killed.

AFP

MNLF Council of 15

He said military leaders had appealed to the MNLF Council of 15 to help contain the violence.

"We asked them (council members) to do their part in controlling this breakaway group by denouncing this treacherous act and assisting the government in pursuing this breakaway group and bring them to the bar of justice," Adan said.

The MNLF Council of 15 ousted Misuari as MNLF chair shortly after he led a renewed rebellion in November 2001 when his armed loyalists held civilians hostage inside his Cabatangan Complex in Zamboanga City. Misuari had protested the holding of new elections for leadership of the ARMM.

That same month, Misuari was captured in Malaysia and was deported to Manila in January 2002. He is detained in Fort Sto. Domingo in Laguna on rebellion charges.

Earlier, Braganza had said the latest attacks were aimed at pressuring the government to move Misuari to a detention cell in Sulu.

Evacuees

Sulu Governor Loong said he had sought assistance from other agencies for the supplies of the evacuees. He said he had coordinated with Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza for additional support, particularly food and other provisions.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman said personnel from the provincial social welfare office were already assisting about 2,000 evacuees. "We have already established evacuation centers (in Jolo), our people know what to do," she said in an interview.

Braganza, who visited Jolo yesterday, said the military would continue to build pressure against the renegades. He was seen in the company of two unidentified US military officials at the military headquarters in Jolo town.

Reached by the INQUIRER through his mobile phone, Braganza said the presence of the US military officials at the height of the operations against the Misuari followers was not unusual.

"They are our consultants," he said.

He declined to comment when asked whether the US officials were directly taking part in preparing the battle plan against the rebels.

Avoid clash with soldiers

In Cotabato City, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front ordered its guerrillas in Sulu to avoid clashes with the military.

"They were under orders to remain in their areas and observe the existing ceasefire agreement with the government," Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said.

Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, commander of the Western Area Police Office, placed the whole of Zamboanga Peninsula under red alert. Most of the rebels involved in the fighting had relatives in the city and that they might sympathize with them, he said.

Police prepared

He said the police were prepared against any possible threat.

"We have many police personnel in this city, in the absence of Task Force Zamboanga personnel, the PNP can handle the situation," Querol said. *Julie S. Alipala, with reports from Therence Koh, Ed General and Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Alcuin Papa in Manila, and Inquirer wires*

16 penniless Pinoy 'tourists' held at Naia

From page A1

work there)," the man, who declined to give his name, said. "I can't understand why we're here. We're not under (recruitment) agencies."

Usual reasons

Another passenger, who also declined to give his name, said he was a truck driver from Cotabato and was on his way to Dubai to attend his aunt's wedding.

He, however, could not recall if his aunt, who he said paid for his ticket, was to be married on Feb. 16 or Feb. 17. But he insisted that he would be staying in Dubai for only a month.

Castro said that the reasons given by the two passengers interviewed by the INQUIRER were two of the most common that the tourist workers would give the PAIRTF.

Illegal recruiters in UAE

"Weddings, invitation by friends, or to be with a sister about to give birth, these are their usual alibis," Castro said.

Castro said the PAIRTF had received information that illegal recruiters based in the UAE would sell package deals—consisting of an airline ticket and a visit visa—to prospective employees' relatives already in the Middle Eastern country for an estimated 1,500 dirham, or some P40,000.

The relatives, in turn, would send them to the Philippines.

Verification process

The 16 had yet to check in for the Thai Airways flight TG 621 when PAIRTF agents asked them to proceed to their 4th floor office at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) for questioning.

Their passports and visas were held until the PAIRTF is able to verify the purpose of their travel. Part of the verification process is calling up the passengers' relatives in their destinations.

Stop undocumented workers

The PAIRTF was created last year by President Macapagal-Arroyo to help curb the proliferation of undocumented Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

'Presidential Valentine's gift . . .

From page A1

He said the government workers are among those reeling from the high cost of basic goods, unabated oil price hikes, tax automatically deducted from their meager salary and an impending increase in the value-added tax.

Gaite pointed out that government workers' salaries have remained frozen since 2001 when a 5-percent salary increase equivalent to a measly P10-15 per day or P200 a month was implemented.

"Since then, the employees have been clamoring for a pay hike but their demand has fallen on deaf ears," Gaite rued.

DepEd employees, too

Public school teachers and other employees of the Department of Education were also dismayed at the "pittance" they would get as cash gift.

"We were made to wait for three months and now we're just getting P1,000. We haven't received any salary increase for the last four years. How far can P1,000 go? It's a pittance," said Domingo Alidon, president of the non-teaching employees union of the DepEd.

He said DepEd employees, which make up half of the entire bureaucracy, were again at the losing end.

He cited that employees in other government agencies and in most local government units had each received a P5,000 cash gift last December.

He admitted he has no proof but that he relied on loose talk from some DepEd employees who have relatives in other government agencies.

Loans

"Once we get confirmation that those in other agencies got more than P1,000 in cash gift, we're going to go out to the streets. *Mag-aalma kami,* (We're going to protest)" Alidon said.

He said most employees had already taken out loans because they expected to get the same P5,000 cash gift they received in December 2003.

"We are really very dismayed. After waiting for so long, we only get this," Alidon said.

Gov't savings

Earlier, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo decided to distribute the productivity enhancement pay among the personnel of the bureaucracy as a reward for the successful compliance with the austerity measures which included cancellation of seminars, parties, foreign trips and cutbacks in electricity and fuel consumption.

Fight to continue

Courage said the state employees and the private sector workers deserve an increase and that they will continue the fight for a P3,000 across-the-board salary increase for the employees and support the demand for a P125 hike in the minimum wage for their counterparts in the private sector.

SMART DUTY FREE

HOLIDAY EXTREME RIDE

GRAND DRAW WINNERS

FORD LYNX WINNER : MRS. NORMA SABALA
BACOOR, CAVITE

FORD EVEREST WINNER : MS. RAINELDA O. LORENZO
PARANAQUE CITY

FORD EVEREST WINNER : MA. CARMEN P. LAPUS
PARANAQUE CITY

DUTY FREE PHILIPPINES

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GRAND DRAW WAS HELD LAST JAN. 30, 2005 AT THE FIESTAMALL ATRIUM AND WAS SUPERVISED BY A DTI REPRESESNTATIVE

Win this *Inquirer mug

INQBOX Question of the Week

What is your reaction to Imelda Marcos' elation over the US court ruling preventing human rights victims from sharing $683 million in Marcos assets that was turned over to the government?

Senders of d best 10 texts as publishd in Tuesday's **INQBOX** *wiL each receiv an *Inquirer Mug! Ü*

Key in: inquirer news name/city/message.
Text your answers to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)

*Metro Manila winners can call Jane at 8978808.
Provincial winners can text:
inquirer ad name/city/mailing address
to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them.

Inquirer
menu

Free snacks in store for tots

By Tarra V. Quismundo

MANILA preschoolers from 1 to 6 years old will be getting a taste of nutritious snacks for free during their stay in city-owned institutions, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza announced yesterday.

Aiming to raise healthy and smart kids in the city, local officials yesterday launched an expanded implementation of "Sustansiya Atienza," City Hall's supplemental feeding program that first took off in 2001.

"In making Manila a world class city, we must keep our children healthy. We have to make sure that the young Manileños, especially those from poor families are getting proper nutrition," Atienza said.

The supplemental feeding program, organized by the Manila Department of Social Welfare to help boost the mental and physical development of kids through adequate nutrition, would benefit some 17,000 enrollees in the city's 370 daycare centers.

Veggie treats

The program's unique food items include the so-called Nutri-Polvoron and Nutri-Cupcake, made from ground vegetables collectively called Kakampe, or vitamin-rich native green leafy vegetables including kangkong, kamote tops, alugbati, malunggay and pechay.

To give these veggies a child-friendly twist, the ground mixed vegetables would be flavored with ingredients such as flour, milk, sugar, salt, cornstarch and sesame seeds.

The recipes for the innovative snacks were developed through the collaboration of the Kababaihan ng Maynila, the Manila Nutrition Committee, and the Department of Science and Technology, and approved by the Bureau of Food and Drugs. *With Christian P. Maglunog, Trainee*

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza (center in floral shirt) gives away food and drinks to school children in Manila at the launching of 'Sustansya Atienza,' a program to provide children in the city with nutritious food. He is joined by Rep. Miles Roces (left) and his son, Kim Atienza. ERIK ARAZAS

Las Piñas PAO chief slain

By Nancy Carvajal

THE HEAD of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) in Las Piñas died in an ambush in front of her house yesterday morning.

Police said Atty. Teresita Vidamo, 53, of Lot 13-B, Casimiro Avenue, Phase 1 Casimiro Village Pulang Lupa, was about to board her L300 van when four unidentified men approached the victim's vehicle.

Two of the suspects, police said, positioned themselves at the rear of the vehicle and served as backup as the two other men walked up to Vidamo and shot her several times in the head.

After the victim fell on the ground, the suspects fled on foot toward Naga Road.

The victim was immediately rushed to a nearby clinic but the attending physician at the Zarate Medical Clinic, Dr. Clyde Rebadulla, declared Vidamo dead on arrival.

Vidamo's son, Romeo, told police investigators that he was supposed to accompany his mother to the PAO's office in Quezon City for a meeting. The son also said, according to the police, that they did not know of any threats on his mother.

Recovered from the scene were two .45-caliber shells and a 9-mm shell.

Chief Public Attorney Persida Acosta said Vidamo was among PAO's best lawyers.

Vidamo reportedly joined PAO in 2001 on the recommendation of then Justice Secretary Merceditas Gutierrez.

"I learned she was about to see me when she was brutally killed. She was hardworking and a dedicated public servant," Acosta said.

"My feeling is whoever killed her was really angry at her because she was shot in the head in front of her grandchild and her son was narrowly missed by the attackers," she added.

The chief public attorney said she could not recall any sensational cases that Vidamo handled.

However, Acosta said, "I guess what happened to her was part of the hazards of being a public servant."

The PAO chief said Vidamo always went to her whenever the latter had an official and personal problem.

Aside from Romeo, Vidamo had a daughter. Her husband was also a government employee.

She was appointed as the PAO chief in Las Piñas in September last year. She also was also a former Neda director.

Nida case prosecutor resigns

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE LEAD government prosecutor in the Nida Blanca murder case has quit, citing the numerous other cases he was handling.

Senior State Prosecutor Archimedes Manabat said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez already approved his request to be relieved from the case starting Monday.

"(Gonzalez) said it was OK. Hopefully, this would help the case," Manabat said.

He said Gonzalez replaced him with Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon.

Manabat said that he asked Gonzalez to relieve him because of the numerous other cases he was handling, including the P1.3 billion drug bust in Cebu in September last year.

"Most of the time, I'm flying back and forth to Cebu. *Naghahabol ako ng oras* (I'm pressed for time)," he said.

No more delays

However, Manabat said that his relief would not delay further the issuance of subpoenas against former military intelligence chief Gen. Galileo Kintanar and the two women linked to Blanca's murder.

He said the two other members of the prosecution panel—State Prosecutors Caridad Junio and Melvin Abad—already reviewed evidence, including the sworn statements of new witnesses Andrada "Anji" Dalandas, Ranny Francisco, and Fedelyn "Mariz" Canonio.

Gonzalez last month said that the DOJ would reopen the case and would conduct a preliminary investigation against Kintanar, former chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; long-time Blanca aide Elena dela Paz; and Ditas San Jose dela Paz, a second cousin of Kaye Torres, Blanca's daughter.

The governor's angry reaction

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

A LITTLE bird at the provincial capitol of Davao Oriental told me that Gov. Elena Palma-Gil reacted angrily to an item in this space on Feb. 5. In Saturday's On Target, I said that the present and past governors in my home province—Palma-Gil and Rosalinda Lopez—were not doing anything about illegal logging in the province.

I said I saw thousands of logs being loaded on a ship late last year from the seashore of Mati, the capital.

Where did those logs come from, I asked, since logging operations in the mountains of San Ignacio, Manay, ceased a long time ago.

Palma-Gil's reaction was typical of her: "*Pila yang kinahanglan na bayad kang* Tulfo (How much does Tulfo want)?"

Probably, her mind set is that money talks in Davao Oriental. Or everyone has his or her price—everyone, including the governor herself. That's probably the reason illegal logging proliferates in Davao Oriental, because money talks in the province.

My spy at the capitol says that heavy equipment belonging to the provincial government used to maintain logging roads in Baganga town.

Before I wrote that item in Saturday's column, my spy warned me not to cross Governor Palma-Gil, whose face is all over the billboards in the province proclaiming her projects.

I'm sorry I made you angry, Ma'am. Next time we meet, I'll bow my head low before your presence.

* * *

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Mike Defensor should look into the alleged takeover of a 300-hectare forest reserve in Solano, Cagayan by a lawyer-politician who had reportedly bragged that he and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo were classmates at the Ateneo.

The forest reserve, which belonged to the government and cannot be expropriated by a private individual, was reportedly taken over by the lawyer-politician before the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

By the way, the widow of the late Cagayan governor and congressman, Rodolfo Aguinaldo, is planning to sue this lawyer-politician in court.

The widow had complained that much of her late husband's property had been titled in favor of this guy who had lawyered for Aguinaldo when he was still alive.

* * *

Commission on Higher Education Chair Rolando dela Rosa should go slow in closing down new nursing schools.

The country needs new nursing schools to meet the demands of thousands of high school graduates who want to take up nursing, including doctors and other professionals. Filipino nurses are in demand in the United States and other English-speaking countries because of their knowledge of the language.

Dela Rosa, a priest who used to be an official at the University of Sto. Tomas (UST), should give new nursing schools a chance to prove their worth.

If these schools are found deficient in some areas, they should be given a chance to make up. Closing them down outright would bring about the suspicion that Dela Rosa has vested interests since the UST also has a nursing school.

OPTICAL Media Board Chair Edu Manzano meets with Quiapo leaders to discuss possible alternative livelihood for peddlers of pirated goods. Manzano (left) shakes the hand of lawyer Daligdig Sumdad while Rep. Benasing Macarambon looks on. MITCH MAURICIO

Options offered for fake disc vendors

By Tina G. Santos

THE OPTICAL Media Board (OMB), led by its chair Edu Manzano, yesterday met with at least 30 Muslim community leaders from Quiapo, Manila, to discuss alternative livelihood opportunities for peddlers of pirated discs.

Manzano said the leaders had asked for the intercession of the OMB to allow them to network with legitimate stakeholders so they could sell their goods and still be competitive in the market.

The community leaders own buildings they had been leasing to vendors of fake CDs, VCDs and DVDs.

"I'm glad that they are willing to cooperate with us. The community leaders are actually looking for avenues to legitimize their businesses," Manzano said.

The OMB and the leaders have signed a Memorandum of Agreement stating that the two parties would work hand in hand to help reduce, if not totally eradicate, the selling of pirated discs, and not to participate in the proliferation of pornographic materials.

Manzano explained that the move was meant not only to inform Muslim leaders that piracy is hurting legitimate industries, but also to help peddlers of pirated products explore other livelihood opportunities.

"We want to show the vendors that they have a choice," Manzano said.

"Although it's not really in our mandate to address this problem, we feel that this option should be considered in pursuit of a solution," he added. "Although raids are an essential part of our operations, we are exploring solutions that would have a bigger and lasting impact."

The OMB chief also said that based from the series of raids they conducted in the past, they realized that piracy is not just an economic problem, adding that vendors resort to piracy because they have no alternative sources of income.

"As long as the vendors are engaged in the illegal trade, they will always be vulnerable to corruption and harassment," Manzano added.

On the other hand, Ali Mindalano, spokesperson and organizer of the Muslim group who had leased one of the buildings in Quiapo, said that they are committed to help the government's antipiracy drive.

Mindalano said they were particularly concerned with the pirating of movies and songs made in the country, as well as pornographic materials.

As an extra measure, he said that his group would be forced to close down the stores of tenants who do not comply with the agreement.

METROBRIEFS

Councilor dies

THE CALOOCAN City Council lost one of its members in Councilor Eduardo Rosca, 56, who died of heart attack early Tuesday morning.

Rosca reportedly complained of difficulty in breathing at about 2:30 a.m. and asked for a glass of water from a son. When his son returned, he found his father hardly breathing and lying face down on the floor inside his bedroom, one of his staff, who refused to be named, said.

Rosca, who was in his last term as councilor, reportedly died on the way to the Heart Center of the Philippines in Quezon City. He is survived by his wife, Gilda Jimenez, and children Mark, Jason, Kristen Joy and Kristopher. The staff said Rosca had a medical checkup on Monday afternoon as he was already not feeling well. *Tina G. Santos*

DESIGNER Blooms, the country's largest network of flower retail stores, recently opened its 15th franchise store in SM City Dasmariñas, bringing its total to 48 stores nationwide. The most beautiful and vibrantly fresh roses will be offered in their most alluring and attractive packages. From left are Designer Blooms president Ting Garcia, franchise owner Jay Bulaclac, Marissa Fenton and assistant vice president Jenny Bautista.

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METRO

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WATSON IN MANILA

British tenor Russell Watson is in town for a concert at the PICC tonight. ROGER MARGALLO

Guns for Mindanao intercepted

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COAST Guard intercepted yesterday afternoon a shipment of firearms headed to Zamboanga during an inspection of outbound cargo.

The discovery of 13 Garand rifles came days after strict monitoring by Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) sea marshals netted shipments of live ammunition and the illegal substance known as "Magic Sugar" or sodium cyclamate.

An artificial sweetening agent, sodium cyclamate is considered as a banned substance.

Food safety issues

Codex Alimentarius, the world body on food standards, has not recommended its use in foods as yet until issues on food safety are resolved.

The Garand rifles were discovered during an inspection made of Pier 4 by PCG and WG&A personnel at Manila's Port Area around 2 p.m., according to PCG spokesperson Lt. Armand Balilo.

He said the firearms were in a box with markings outside identifying the consignee as Alinio Alpad, with a Zamboanga address.

Operatives are still looking for the person who brought the rifles to Pier 4.

Over 3,000 rounds of ammunition for various firearms were seized from Bobby Clupino at the receiving area of the ATS/ZIP warehouse at Pier 8 in Tondo on Feb. 7.

The ammunition, which had been placed in a sack, was discovered by dogs from the K-9 unit.

Clupino told operatives that a WG&A porter, who was only identified as "Noel," instructed him to bring the sack to Pier 14.

Clupino claimed that he did not know what the sack contained. The shipment was supposed to be brought to Iligan City.

The sack contained 3,198 rounds for a M-60 submachine gun, 850 rounds for a .38 caliber hand gun, and 151 rounds for a M-14 assault rifle.

On Saturday, 200 grams of "Magic Sugar" were found packed in four sacks at the WG&A warehouse at Pier 18.

The substance, said to have originated from Indonesia, was found by a joint team of PCG sea marshals and WG&A personnel who were patrolling the area with K-9 units.

The sea marshals regularly inspect bags and packages at the ports and in passenger and cargo vessels as part of the government's antiterrorism and antismuggling measures.

Jeep robber gunned down by passenger

ONE OF five alleged robbers who held up a jeepney in Manila before dawn yesterday was shot dead by one of the passengers they had victimized.

Suspect Rodilito Navarro was hit in the back of the head when he was fired upon by the unidentified passenger, who fled the crime scene after the incident in Tondo, Manila.

Police said a cell phone and some of the loot were found on Navarro, 21, of Almeda Street, Tondo.

Investigation by SPO1 Raul Olavario showed that Navarro and four other unidentified men announced a holdup inside a Monumento-bound jeepney at 4:30 a.m.

After taking the passengers' valuables, the suspects got off at the corner of Batangas and Juan Luna Streets in Tondo.

Unknown to them, however, one of the passengers seated in the front seat was armed.

The unidentified passenger, who was described as 50 to 56 years old and of medium built, pulled out a gun and fired two shots at the suspects. *Leila B. Salaverria*

Ex-NBI agent's WPD 'allies' defy orders

By Leila B. Salaverria

NO TRIAL by publicity for us.

Defying their commanding officers, 11 members of the Western Police District who were relieved of their posts over alleged links to a dismissed agent of the National Bureau of Investigation refused to go to Camp Crame to be presented in a police lineup.

The no-show irked police chief Director General Edgar Aglipay who said that if the policemen failed to show up today, they would be declared absent without leave.

However, Supt. Marcelino Pedrozo in a letter to Aglipay said, "The police lineup is tantamount to a trial by publicity."

Pedrozo, who spoke in behalf of the 11 WPD members, used to head the Malate police station and is the highest ranking policeman believed to have had ties with former NBI agent Martin Soriano.

Soriano had been arrested for allegedly kidnapping a businesswoman on Jan. 28.

According to Pedrozo's letter, should they appear at the office of Aglipay and be presented to media it "might insinuate that (we) have already been charged of any violation of the law and found guilty by the courts."

Pedrozo and his 10 colleagues were made to step down from their posts because of suspicions that they were involved in illegal activities allegedly perpetrated by Soriano.

Earlier, Pedrozo denied being in cahoots with Soriano, saying he only met the latter in January this year when a TV reporter introduced them. Soriano was supposed to give him information about a drug operation, which, however, did not materialize.

In his letter to Aglipay, Pedrozo said that being presented in a lineup would be a violation of his and the other policemen's rights.

He explained that in the absence of any charges against them, they remained officers and men of good standing in the PNP.

The officer added that presenting them to media would subject them to humiliation.

"The undersigned and his men would be exposed to shame, mockery and ridicule not only to their fellow members in the Philippine National Police, but more importantly, to their respective families," the letter read.

The other WPD members who were relieved from their posts were Insp. Casan Ali, PO3 Rodolfo Enderina, PO2 Ernie Reyes, PO2 Alexander delos Reyes, PO2 Ronilo Marquez, SPO2 Fernando Cantillas, PO1 Ramil de Guzman, SPO2 Elmer Manalang, PO1 Ronald Rivera and PO2 Arsenio Tercino. *With a report from Christian V. Esguerra*

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Globe bolsters SEAG fund by ₱100 million

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PAGDANGANAN

ABLAZA

FINALLY, funds have started to flow for the country's staging of the Southeast Asian Games in the country from Nov 27-Dec. 5.

Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee chair Obet Pagdanganan yesterday announced that telecommunications giant Globe Telecom has secured a Gold sponsorship package worth P100 million.

The deal, forged between Pagdanganan and Globe chief executive officer Gerry Ablaza last week, represented 20 percent of the target of P500 million set by the Philsoc's domestic marketing team.

The announcement came on the eve of the meeting between prospective corporate sponsors and Philsoc officials led by Pagdanganan, vice chair and Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco and first vice president, Rep. Monico Puentevella.

"This is certainly very encouraging. The private sector plays a very vital role in this hosting of the SEA Games and I am very confident that others will follow the lead of Globe," said Pagdanganan.

The show of support somehow eased financial concerns for the Games, slated in Manila and three provincial sites, which is expected to cost the country at least P800 million.

"The idea is not to burden the national government too much in fulfilling this commitment that is why we are working together with the private sector as best as we can," said Pagdanganan, who expressed confidence that the Philsoc can raise more than P1 billion in sponsorship.

Under Philsoc's marketing strategy, a major sponsorship amounting to P100 million will be classified as gold, P50 million silver and P30 million bronze, according to local marketing team head Pete Cura.

The horseracing industry had already done its share in boosting the SEAG coffers after the staging of the SEA Games Cup at the Sta. Ana racetrack last week through the efforts of Cojuangco, who is also the ways and means committee chair of the Philsoc.

The First Gentleman Foundation had likewise raised P160 million through pledges from the private sector recently to fund the training of the country's athletes who are tasked to wrest the overall championship this time.

Sparmates favor Manny over Erik

THEIR sparring took only three rounds Tuesday, but IBF super bantamweight champion Israel "Magnifico" Valdez came out convinced that Manny Pacquiao would beat his fellow Mexican Erik Morales in their fight at the MGM Grand in Los Angeles on March 19.

And to think that before Pacquiao took on his friend and chief sparring partner he had gone through five rounds with Raymundo "Sugar" Beltran.

"I am Mexican but I think Manny will win. He is now faster and stronger," Valdez told California-based Filipino Winchell Campos Tuesday.

The last time they sparred two years ago, Pacquiao was preparing for his super bantam title fight against Marco Antonio Barrera, whom he eventually stopped in the 11th round. Then, Vasquez could still match Pacquiao's speed and punching power.

Now that Pacquiao has moved up to the flyweight division, Vasquez feels Pacquiao has gotten harder to hit and could take stronger punches as well.

During their sparring, Pacquiao once raised his arms, covered his head peek-a-boo style, and let Vasquez deliver five powerful shots to his ribcage with hardly any effect.

"Manny is my friend but aside from that, I know he has what it takes to win against Morales."

"Manny will win, I don't know, probably by knockout. Morales is taller and bigger and that could spell the difference, too," added Vasquez.

Against Beltran, Pacquiao was almost untouchable. He pounded the Mexican almost at will and stopped only when Beltran's legs wobbled as a result of combinations to the body.

"I have never experienced getting hit this bad and that strong but it is an honor fighting Manny because I learn a lot from him. It makes me a better boxer," said Beltran, who concurred with Vasquez's choice.

Pacquiao has now completed 44 rounds of sparring and said that he is feeling good.

Pacquiao is slated to face the Mexican legend this March and is gunning for a victory that will cement his status as the best pound-for-pound in his class.

The fight took the place of the Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez title rematch, which fell apart because of purse squabbles.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Agassi wins 13th straight SAP opener

/A24

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Illinois vs Michigan; 8 a.m.; North Carolina vs Duke; 10 a.m.; UConn vs Syracuse; 4 p.m.; Boston College vs Notre Dame; 6 p.m.; ESPN - It's Rivalry Week in college basketball highlighted by the Tar Heels clashing with the Blue Devils.

NBA - Spurs vs Wizards; 8 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports - San Antonio puts its league best record on the line against Washington.

GOLF: AT&T Pro-Am; tomorrow at 4 a.m.; Sports Plus - The first round tees off from Pebble Beach.

BILLIARDS: 2004 World Pool Championship; 8:30 p.m. (r); ESPN - Take another look at last year's quarterfinal and semifinal rounds in Taiwan.

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Welcoat-Montaña title rubber today

GAME TODAY (*Makati Coliseum*)
3 p.m.—Welcoat vs Montaña
(Game 5 of best-of-five Finals)

THERE was no doubt for Welcoat that the PBL Open Championship series will come down to a do-or-die duel.

"We were very focused and we didn't want to give up because we already reached this far," said veteran guard Ryan Dy, whose clutch plays in the final minute lifted the Paintmasters past the Montaña Jewels with a dramatic 80-77 Game 4 win last Tuesday.

"Even before the game, we were thinking that there will be a Game 5," added forward Leo Najorda, whose 18-point performance foiled the Jewels' bid for their first ever title.

And Welcoat coach Caloy Garcia aims to bank on this momentum when his Paintmasters battle the Jewels for the title in the finale of their best-of-five series at 3:30 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum.

"We've been given another chance so we're going to finish them off," noted Garcia.

Jewels coach Robert Sison, however, is hoping for a reversal of fortunes.

"We were almost there but the breaks of the game went to Welcoat in the end," said Sison. "Hopefully, *mapunta naman sa amin* (the breaks favor us too)."

Holding a 77-76 lead in the final minute of Game 4, the Jewels nearly bagged their first ever title since joining the league in 1998. But two turnovers and Dy's heroics spoiled the Jewels' celebration.

Sison thinks, though, that the heartbreaking loss did not dampen the Jewels' spirits.

"Hindi pa kami nawawalan ng pag-asa (We haven't lost heart)," he said. "I have high respect for my players *kaya malaki pa rin ang pag-asa namin* (so we still have a big chance)."

Unlike the Jewels, however, Garcia believes that he no longer needs to pump up his team's energy.

"Right now the team's morale is high and I'm sure we're going to have a good game," he said.

The Paintmasters are going for their sixth title in 10 finals.

Before Welcoat's second unit stepped up in Game 4, Anthony Washington, Chester Tolomia and Marvin Ortiguerra have been carrying the Paintmasters through.

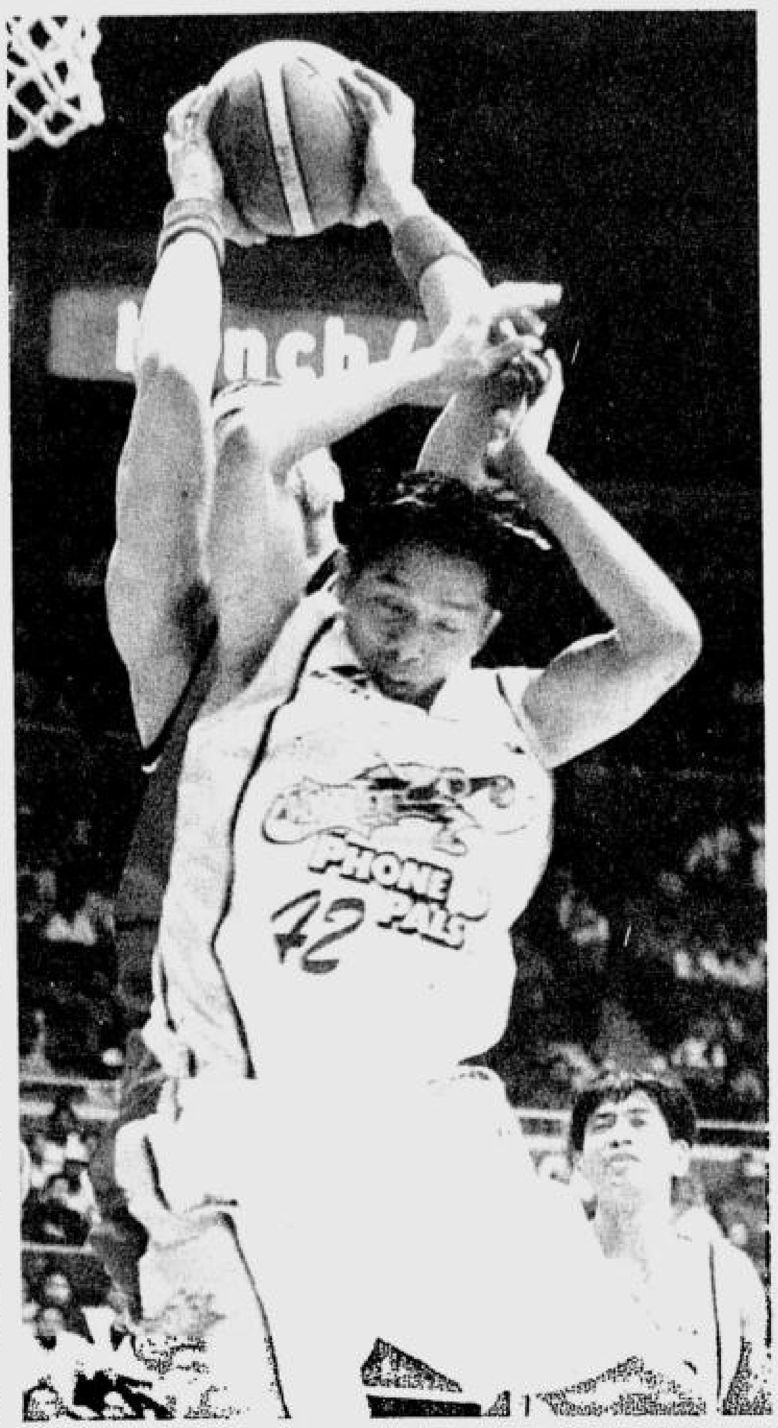
The Paintmasters have been using their edge in height and heft to dominate the boards, 46-34.5.

Montaña has been leaning on the stellar performances of Most Valuable Player Jon Dan Salvador and Alex Compton, who averaged 21.5 points in the title series.

The Jewels have also limited their errors to 17, compared to the Paintmasters' 25.8 average turnovers.

Welcoat took the series opener, 73-65, before Montaña claimed Game 2 (55-48) and Game 3 (77-67).

Jasmine W. Payo



EVERY possession counts and Barangay Ginebra's Andy Seigle knows it as he battles Talk N Text's Felix Belano for the rebound. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

2 OVERTIMES

Kings just a win away

GAME TOMORROW
(Araneta Coliseum)
7:30 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Talk 'N Text
(*Game 6, best-of-seven Finals*)

By June Navarro

RODNEY Santos made two key steals in the dying seconds to lift Barangay Ginebra past Talk 'N Text in double overtime, 95-85, in Game 5 of the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup Finals last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Santos broke Jimmy Alapag's inbound pass and scored on a fastbreak that made it 89-85, shattering the Phone Pals' momentum and eventually giving the Kings a 3-2 edge in the best-of-seven championship series.

Santos sealed the outcome with another steal off Alapag that Mark Caguioa turned into a fastbreak following Eric Menk's charities as the Gin Kings finally finished off the Phone Pals.

In all, Santos had three steals in the second extension to preserve the heroics of Caguioa, Menk and Rommel Adducul down the stretch.

Caguioa finished with 26 points, Sunday Salvacion had 18, including four three-pointers, Santos added 17 while Menk, the conference's MVP, had 13 points and 16 rebounds.

Adducul scored all of his four points near the end of regulation and grabbed 15 rebounds on top of three blocks.

History is also on the side of the Kings as nine of the last 10 teams which took a 3-2 lead in a best-of-seven Finals after a 2-2 split went on to win the championship, with seven of the nine clinching it in Game 6.

The Kings could have won it in regulation but Santos threw an airball just as the clock expired.

Regulation ended at 73-all and the first overtime at 81-81 after Willie Miller's trey missed its mark at the buzzer.

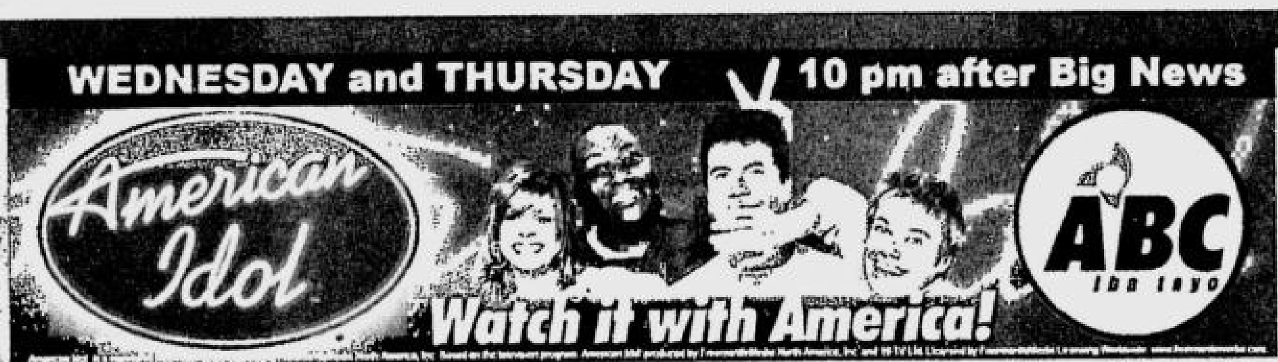
The scores:

GINEBRA 95—Caguioa 26, Salvacion 18, Santos 17, Menk 13, Seigle 10, Dimaunahan 7, Adducul 4, Valenzuela 0, Noble 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 85—Pablo 27, Telan 15, Miller 14, De Ocampo 10, Alapag 7, Gelig 4, Camaso 4, Ravena 3, Fran 1, Belano 0.

Quarters: 14-23, 33-32, 57-58, 73-73, 81-81, 95-85

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE
Thursday, February 10, 2005



WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY 10 pm after Big News
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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Masked Rider Ryuki		Gatekeepers	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Til Death Do Us Part	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
NBN		Taiwan/ Winner TV Shopping		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision	Next Stop			Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Sinulog Festival					
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA			PBA		Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Inq TV	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Magpakailanman			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Wrestling		NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Video Hit Parade	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Chowtime Na!		V League				Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	OPTV	EZ Shop
Solar		WWE Smackdown				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxstel	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Thunder Box		JAG		Fearcom			
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix		100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd				Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Presents		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Good Morning Miami	What I Like About You	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News		Will & Grace	JKX	Ed		Girls Behaving Badly	Simple Life 2	Tonight Show With Jay Leno			
Cinema One		Eto Na Naman Ako				Hihintayin Kita Sa Langit				Kaaway Hanggang Hukay				Kung Ikaw Ay Isang Panaginip				Hula Mo Huli Ko	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	UAAP				Batman Beyond	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	America's Next Top Model	Barkada Nights				News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Spin City
AXN	The Missing Gun				Warriors Of Heaven And Earth					Money Train				David Blaine Magic Man		Godzilla			
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol		Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol		The Chronicle: News From The Edge		Outback Jack		Friends	American Idol
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Innovation		Scientific American Frontiers		Mummy Road Shows	Tales Of The Living Dead	The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Built For The Kill		Myths Of The Fall		Top 5		Megastructures		Secret China	
Solar Sports		Copenhagen Masters MD Final			Greatest Fights				ATP Heineken Open '05 Finals				NBA TV Daily	NBA Game San Antonio @ Washington					Hardwood Classics Lakers @ Spurs '04
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix!	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	E! News Weekend		Good Finds	Lifestyle		Area		Road & Track	Back To Basics
HBO				Leave It To Beaver			Virtuosity (5.35 PM)				Tommy Boy (7.25 PM)			Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle			Eraser (10.45PM)		
Star Movies			Conan The Barbarian				My Big Fat Greek Wedding			Sweet Home Alabama				Johnny English			Joe Dirt		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Codename: Kids Next Door	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN				Big East Conf.: Connecticut vs. Syracuse				Big East Conf: Boston College vs Notre Damme				Sportscenter Taiwan	2004 Taiwan World Pool C'ship Taiwan						Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny	George Of The Jungle 2			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	The Adventures Of The Great Mouse Detective	
Cinemax	Orange County (2.45 PM)	To Sir, With Love II (4.15 PM)			The Screaming Room Books Into Horrors		Bounce (6.20 PM)			Dreamcatcher				Lightning: Bolts Of Destruction (10.10PM)			The Perfect Husband (11.45PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Dog Gone Love				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Strong Medicine		Boyfriend For Christmas			Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Judging Amy (11.25PM)
Discovery Channel		Hour Asia				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Extreme Engineering		Ultimate Cars	Building The Ultimate	Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Power Zone	
MTV Philippines		MTV Asia Hitlist		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits		MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	Non-Stop Hits	MTV U-Break	MTV Jams	Non-Stop Hits	TRL		Globally Dismissed	Pimp My Ride	VH1 Video Collections	
Sports Plus	FBR Open Day3						Golf International	Italian Serie A highlight Program		Pac 10 Oregon @ California National					You've Got to See This	WTA L.A. C'ships Myskina vs Williams			Porsche md 11&12
EWTN	A Christian Pilgrimage To Jordan	Angelus (3.15 PM)	Suffering Church	Angel Force	Children's Rosary	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	The Spirit Of Catholic Leadership	Saints: A Closer Look	EWTN Gallery	EWTN Live With Father Mitch Pacwa		Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Council Of Faith	Daily Mass		Angelus (10.15PM)	Holy Spirit In The Church	The Journey Home	

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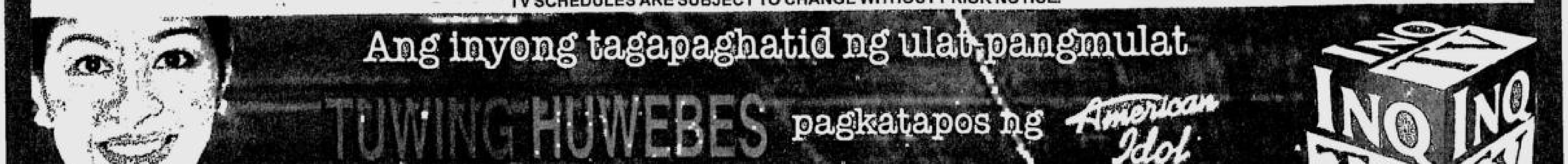

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NBA on RPN
MIAMI HEAT @ NEW YORK KNICKS 7:30 pm
NBA RADIO
LA LAKERS @ NEW JERSEY NETS 8:30 am

Champions League starts tomorrow

THE PHILIPPINE Christian University Dolphins, the reigning National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) champions, have been seeded first in the Collegiate Champions League set to start tomorrow at the San Beda College gym.

The Dolphins are one of four NCAA teams represented in the 16-man cast, the others being University of Perpetual Help, Letran and San Beda.

Defending champion Far Eastern University, seeded second, heads the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) representatives which include Ateneo de Manila, University of the East and University of the Philippines.

UP took over the slot left by UAAP titlist La Salle which opted to take a much-needed break.

UPHR and Ateneo have been seeded third and fourth, respectively.

Completing the Metro Manila-based squads in the roster are University of Manila and Emilio Aguinaldo College.

Out to challenge the Big City's domination are teams from the South led by University of Visayas of Cebu.

The other provincial squads are University of San Jose-Recoletos, West Negros College, University of Cebu, University of Mindanao and University of Southern Philippines.

The UM Wildcats won the right to represent Mindanao after beating Holy Cross of Davao in a three-game series held in Davao.

Rey Gamboa, chair of the organizing committee, said the top three teams in the knockout competition will receive cash prizes for their respective sports development programs.

La Salle, UST start finals tiff

GAMES TODAY *(Rizal Memorial Coliseum)*
1:30 p.m.—PSC vs Letran
3:30 p.m.—Santo Tomas vs La Salle

By Musong R. Castillo

AUGUST Sta. Maria can't remember just how many titles he's won as volleyball coach of the Santo Tomas Tigresses.

What he knows is that playing for the Shakey's V-League title is as big as any league he's conquered—if not bigger.

"This is not only for the (V-League) title, but as an instrument to bring back the glory of the sport," Sta. Maria told the INQUIRER yesterday, on the eve of Game 1 of their best-of-three series with favored La Salle.

"This series is a big reason why volleyball will become popular again," added Sta. Maria, who has been at the helm of the UST program for the last 25 years that earned him dozens of UAAP and Inter-Collegiate titles.

Sta. Maria couldn't have put it any better with the two glamorous collegiate powerhouses starting their duel at 3:30 p.m. at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

"We will play for the fans. We will go all out for them," said Sta. Maria, who declared his defending champion Tigresses as the underdogs. "We will be playing against a complete team. But we will give them a good fight."

Like his counterpart at La Salle, Ramil de Jesus, Sta. Maria refused to predict the outcome. But Santo Tomas will come into the game fresher than the Lady Archers, who had to go through a knockout game with Letran on Tuesday.

Letran and PSC, meanwhile, clash for the crumbs in the 1:30 p.m. contest.

"They (Tigresses) are well-rested, and they have the advantage, if only for that," said De Jesus after a straight-sets victory over the Lady Knights on Tuesday. "We had little time to prepare for today."

UST swept the PSC Lady Legends in its own semis series, and will be coming into the game with the benefit of scouting its opponents longer.

Roxanne Pimentel will still be Santo Tomas' main weapon, according to Sta. Maria. But he expects the others to step up to the challenge, especially Mary Jean Balse, Rubie de Leon and Kate Co Yu Kang.

Balse, a recruit from the University of Mindanao's Tagum branch, won MVP honors in the first conference and Sta. Maria could be calling on the tall attacker if Pimentel runs into trouble.

Michelle and Mayette Carolino will again lead the Lady Archers.

La Salle and UST split their elimination assignments and wound up with 11-1 slates going into the playoffs.

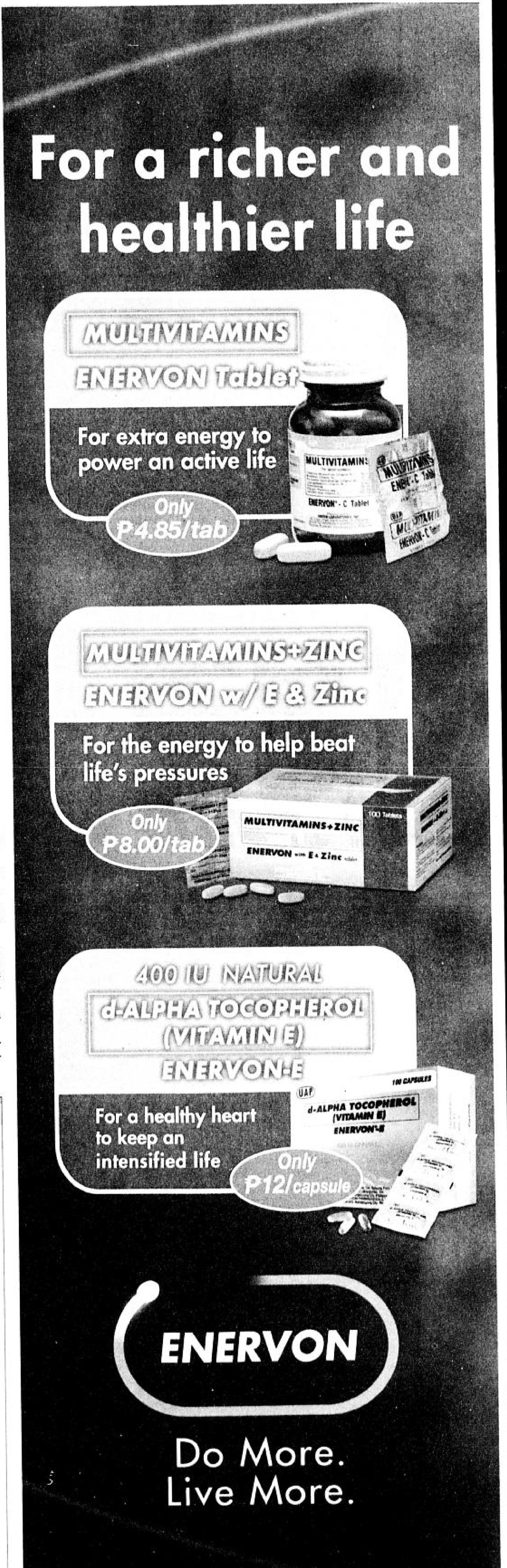
RP slots for Rivero, Go

ATHENS Olympians Mary Antoinette Rivero and Tshomlee Go triumphed last Sunday to earn national team slots in the Petron CPJ (Carlos Palanca Jr.) taekwondo championships at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Central Gym's Rivero beat UP's Rani Ortega for the senior women's light-welter gold medal, while Air Force's Go toppled San Beda's Jose Emmanuel Enriquez in the senior men's flyweight finals.

Other veteran jins who prevailed in the senior division of the tourney organized by the Philippine Taekwondo Association and supported by Petron, Milo and Philippine Sports Commission were bantamweight Manuel Rivero Jr., welterweight Alexander Briones, middleweight Dax Alberto Morfe, finweight Eunice Alora, flyweight Sugar Catalan and heavyweight Margarita Bonifacio.

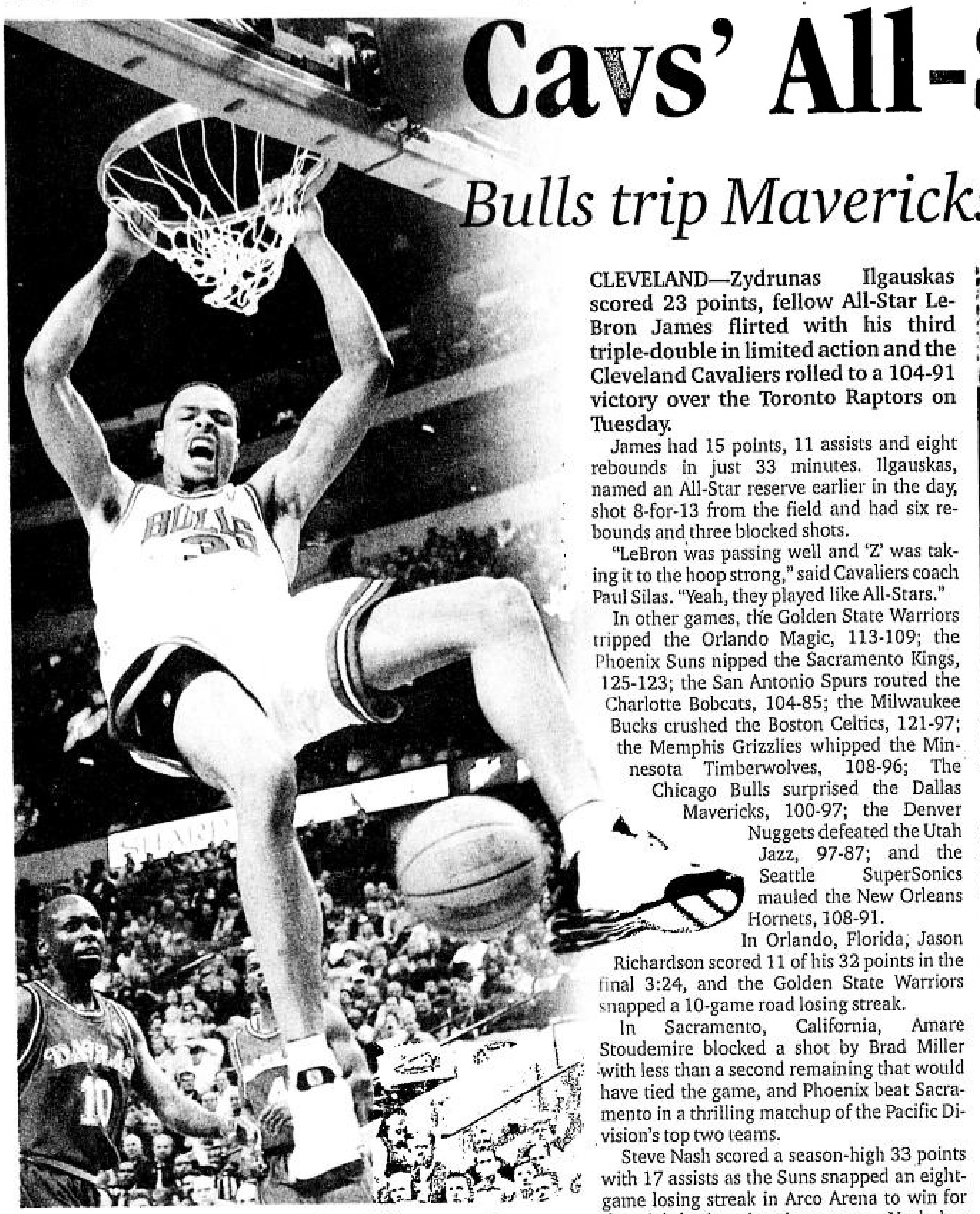
Rivero of DLSU-St. Benilde beat PAF's Gerald Gregorio, PAF's Briones oufought International School's Ian Ignacio, Nueva Ecija's Morfe rapped UE's Daniel Tan, DLSU-Taft's Alora whipped teammate Gerrielyn Aranzanso, UP's Catalan tripped UE's Lilac Mangondih and Ateneo's Bonifacio defeated Philippine Normal University's Clarice Tongco.



INNOVA

Cavs' All-Stars sparkle

Bulls trip Mavericks; Spurs win minus Duncan



FORWARD Tyson Chandler of the Chicago Bulls screams after finishing a drive with a monster slam dunk against the Dallas Mavericks in Dallas, Texas. AP

CLEVELAND—Zydrunas Ilgauskas scored 23 points, fellow All-Star LeBron James flirted with his third triple-double in limited action and the Cleveland Cavaliers rolled to a 104-91 victory over the Toronto Raptors on Tuesday.

James had 15 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds in just 33 minutes. Ilgauskas, named an All-Star reserve earlier in the day, shot 8-for-13 from the field and had six rebounds and three blocked shots.

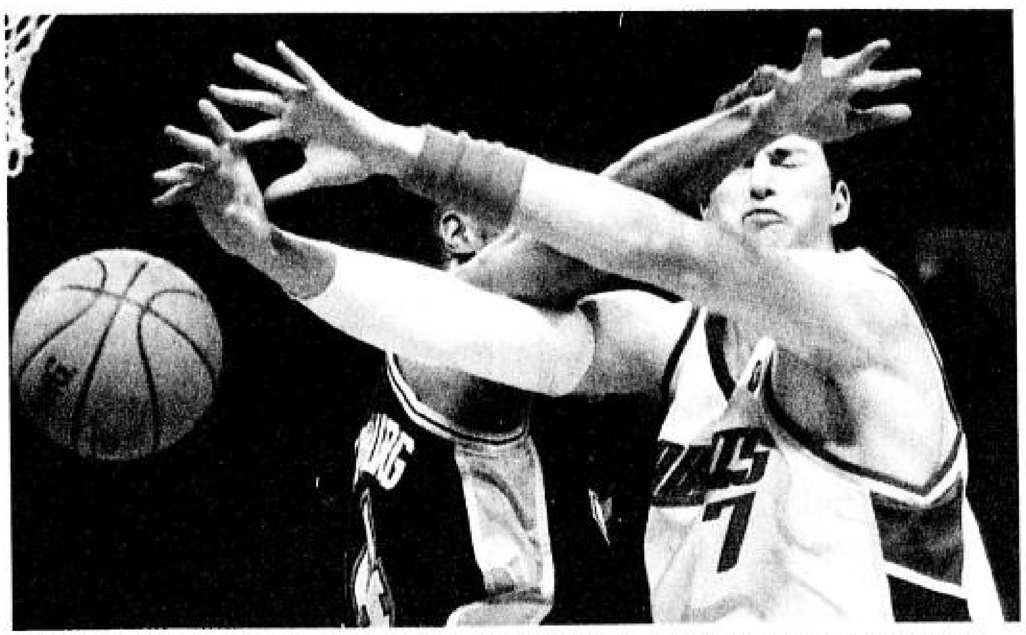
"LeBron was passing well and 'Z' was taking it to the hoop strong," said Cavaliers coach Paul Silas. "Yeah, they played like All-Stars."

In other games, the Golden State Warriors tripped the Orlando Magic, 113-109; the Phoenix Suns nipped the Sacramento Kings, 125-123; the San Antonio Spurs routed the Charlotte Bobcats, 104-85; the Milwaukee Bucks crushed the Boston Celtics, 121-97; the Memphis Grizzlies whipped the Minnesota Timberwolves, 108-96; The Chicago Bulls surprised the Dallas Mavericks, 100-97; the Denver Nuggets defeated the Utah Jazz, 97-87; and the Seattle SuperSonics mauled the New Orleans Hornets, 108-91.

In Orlando, Florida, Jason Richardson scored 11 of his 32 points in the final 3:24, and the Golden State Warriors snapped a 10-game road losing streak.

In Sacramento, California, Amare Stoudemire blocked a shot by Brad Miller with less than a second remaining that would have tied the game, and Phoenix beat Sacramento in a thrilling matchup of the Pacific Division's top two teams.

Steve Nash scored a season-high 33 points with 17 assists as the Suns snapped an eight-game losing streak in Arco Arena to win for the eighth time in nine games. Nash has passed for 11 or more assists in each of his last seven games.



CHARLOTTE Bobcats big man Primoz Brezec (right) is fouled hard by San Antonio Spurs forward Tony Massenburg in the first quarter of their game. AP

Chris Webber had 24 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists for his third triple-double this season and second in as many games—marking the first time in Sacramento franchise history a player has recorded back-to-back triple-doubles.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, not even the absence of Tim Duncan could slow San Antonio, which got a big lift from the return of Rasho Nesterovic to beat Charlotte.

With Duncan out for the first time this season with a sprained ankle, Nesterovic marked his return to the starting lineup after a six-game absence with 15 points and eight rebounds in just 22 minutes.

Tony Parker had 20 points, Manu Ginobili had 12 and Bruce Bowen added 10 for the Spurs, who improved to an NBA-best 39-10.

In Milwaukee, Mike James scored a career-high 28 points, including eight 3-pointers, as Milwaukee defeated Boston.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Lorenzen Wright had 18 points and 12 rebounds Tuesday, leading six Memphis players in double figures in overcoming Minnesota.

In Dallas, Luol Deng had 30 points and 11 rebounds and Eddy Curry added 23 points, including several big buckets in the fourth quarter, as Chicago edged Dallas.

The Bulls won for the 23rd time, matching last season's total. This one ended a three-game losing streak and put them over .500 (23-22) in February for the first time since Michael Jordan's last season.

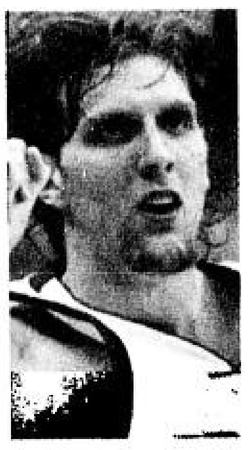
In Denver, Earl Boykins came off the bench to score 20 points, outscoring all five Utah starters all by himself, and Carmelo Anthony had 25 points for Denver.

Utah's starters combined for just 19 points.

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored 26 points and Vladimir Radmanovic added 18 points off the bench as Seattle downed New Orleans.

Allen played 36 minutes and shot 11-for-17. Radmanovic made four 3-pointers. *AP*

Ginobili leads first-time relievers



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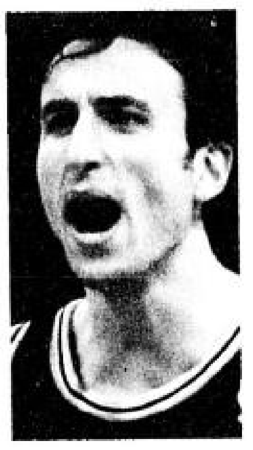

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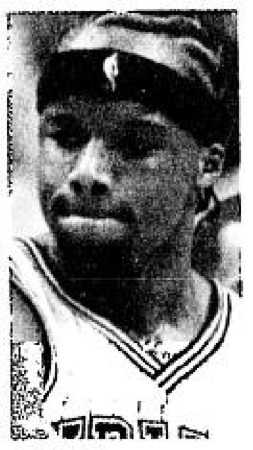


O'NEAL

PIERCE

NEW YORK—Argentine star Manu Ginobili of the San Antonio Spurs was among six players picked as NBA All-Stars for the first time when the reserves were announced on Tuesday.

Dwyane Wade of the Miami Heat, Gilbert Arenas and Antawn Jamison of the Washington Wizards, Amare Stoudemire of the Phoenix Suns, and Rashard Lewis of the Seattle SuperSonics also gained their first All-Star selections in balloting by the NBA's 30 head coaches.

Cleveland's LeBron James, chosen as an Eastern Conference starter last week, is a first-time All-Star, too.

The East's other reserves for the Feb. 20 game in Denver are Lithuanian center Zydrunas Ilgauskas of Cleveland and Ben Wallace of Detroit, forward Jermaine O'Neal of Indiana, and guard Paul Pierce of Boston.

Canada guard Steve Nash of Phoenix and Ray Allen of Seattle, and German forward Dirk Nowitzki of Dallas and Shawn Marion of Phoenix were selected for the Western Conference team.

The selections of Ilgauskas, Ginobili, Nash, Nowitzki, Tim Duncan (US Virgin Islands) and Yao Ming (China) gives the 2005 All-Star game six international players.

Ginobili, a member of the Argentine team that won a gold medal at the Athens Olympics, is averaging 15.9 points, 4.4 rebounds and 4.0 assists while shooting nearly 50 percent for the Spurs, who have the league's best record (38-10).

Among those left off the rosters were New Jersey's Jason Kidd, who had played in every All-Star game since 1998, and Orlando's Steve Francis, a three-time All-Star.

Also noteworthy for his absence was Sacramento center Brad Miller, who apparently fell victim to Western Conference coaches filling in Stoudemire as a center. Coaches were required to select two guards, two forwards, one center and two other players regardless of position, but could not vote for their own players.

The Kings also have three other players with 11 combined previous All-Star appearances—Chris Webber, Peja Stojakovic and Mike Bibby—who were left off this year's team.

The East's starters are Philadelphia's Allen Iverson, Miami's Shaquille O'Neal, New Jersey's Vince Carter, Orlando's Grant Hill and James.

Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers, Tracy McGrady and Yao of Houston, Kevin Garnett of Minnesota and Duncan of San Antonio will start for the West.

The coaches are Gregg Popovich of the Spurs for the West, and Stan Van Gundy of the Heat for the East. *AP*

SPORTSWATCH

Makati Sports Club launches tennis school

THE MAKATI Sports Club recently launched the Tennis Academy, a comprehensive program geared at providing the best professional instruction in the game. The US-certified and licensed tennis professionals who will facilitate instruction include Rey Frencillo, Victoriano Nalus Jr., Renato Tarroza and Rolando Alayon. The program offers four courses, namely, beginner, improver, intermediate and advanced. Instruction is being conducted in the appointed courts of the Club's Sports Pavilion and runs from Mondays to Fridays from noon to 4 p.m. and from Saturdays and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Interested parties may call 817-8731 to 39 extensions 25 or 52.

URBL slates refs' auditions

THE UNITED Regional Basketball League (URBL) is now accepting applicants for referees as it begins full-blast preparations for the coming 2005 season. This search is open to all male and female applicants below 35 years of age. The aspirant must be a college graduate with a minimum height of 5-foot-7 for men and 5-foot-2 for women. Interested parties should personally deliver their resumés at the URBL offices located at Suite 206, Parc Chateau Condominium, Onyx Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City on Feb. 16 (Wednesday) and 18 (Friday) at 1 p.m. for screening and interview. Provincial applicants may forward their resumés by mail.

Torre nearly perfect in simul exhibition

GRANDMASTER Eugene Torre accomplished a near-perfect score of 20 wins against a single draw and no loss in a simultaneous exhibition held at the Agno Valley College gym in Malasiqui, Pangasinan, last Saturday. The 21-board exhibition match of Asia's first grandmaster served as a side event during the opening of the 1st Mayor Alfonso V. Soriano Mayor's Cup chess championship.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Cockfighting heavyweights square off

THE SHOWDOWN between cockfighting heavyweights Patrick Antonio and Jun Santiago finally happens today when the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby gets under way at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. Antonio and Santiago tallied three wins each in last Tuesday's qualifying round. Today's championship round will start at 4 p.m. Meanwhile, those who wish to join the NCA stag derbies in September must have their cockerels screened and wing-banded anytime from March 1 to 31. For inquiries, call 911-3101 and 911-2928.

CONGRATULATIONS & WELCOME HOME !!
JAYVIE AGOJO
champion
MICHAEL BIBAT
1ST Runner-Up

SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN: Jayvie Agojo (middle) and Michael Bibat, champion and 1st runner-up, respectively, in their divisions at the recent Faldo Series International Trophy are welcomed at the airport by (from left) National Golf Association of the Philippines executive officer Jake Ayson, team captain Jun Galindez, director for Luzon Roberto Santiago, Jayvie's father Jun and Michael's father Cris.

Agassi wins 13th straight SAP opener

AGASSI AP

SAN JOSE, California—In what has become his personal tennis playground, 34-year-old Andre Agassi defeated Bobby Reynolds, 6-4, 6-4, Tuesday in the first round of the SAP Open.

The second-seeded Agassi has won his first-round match in all 13 appearances at this event. Reynolds is playing in his fifth career ATP level event.

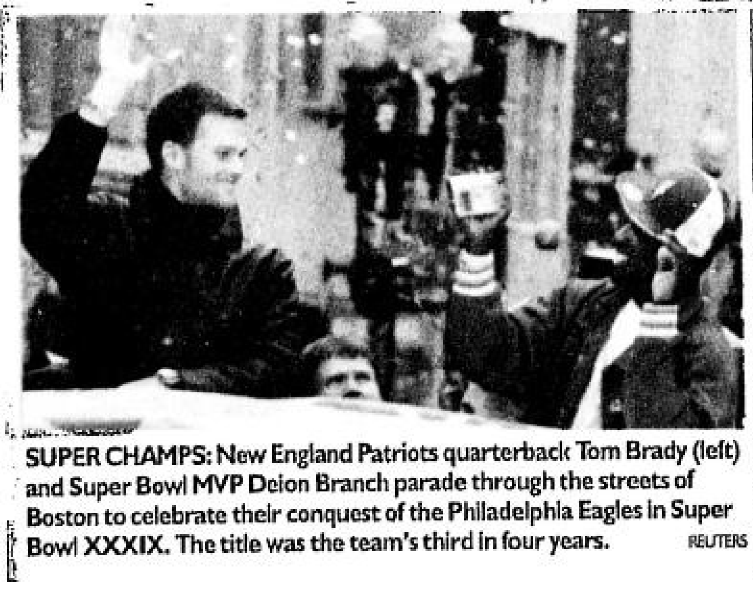
In other matches, third-seeded German Tommy Haas dispatched Gregory Carraz of France, 6-3, 7-6 (3); Vincent Spadea beat Frenchman Anthony Dupuis, 5-7, 6-3, 6-2; seventh-seeded Jurgen Melzer of Austria advanced with a 6-2, 7-5 win over qualifier Glenn Weiner of the United States. Melzer won 83 percent of his first-serve points in taking the first meeting between the players. Czech qualifier Tomas Zib defeated Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany for the fourth straight time.

"It took a while to sort of get comfortable," Agassi said. "Ultimately I started getting a sense of my court position. I'm hoping I can see a nice arc to my improvement out there. I have to be disciplined with my shot selection and learn when to be aggressive at the right time."

Agassi played his first match since announcing he was returning to the U S Davis Cup team that will play Croatia in early March.

"I'm surprised circumstances would lend me being able to play," Agassi said. "I had the mind-set you give everything to Davis Cup or you don't. I want to be a part of it, but I can't play every time."

Team coach Patrick McEnroe visited with Agassi and convinced him he could play when he could. Agassi called each player to make sure he was wanted and needed. *AP*



SUPER CHAMPS: New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (left) and Super Bowl MVP Deion Branch parade through the streets of Boston to celebrate their conquest of the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl XXXIX. The title was the team's third in four years. REUTERS

Original Russian tennis babe stalked

MIAMI BEACH, Florida—A homeless man obsessed with tennis star Anna Kournikova swam naked across Biscayne Bay in search of her home and got caught lounging in the buff at her neighbor's pool, police said.

Police said William Lepeska screamed, "Anna! Save me!" as he was arrested Jan. 30 from the house three doors down from Kournikova's $5 million home. He faced a court appearance Friday.

Lepeska, 40, who has an "Anna" tattoo on his arm, was charged with stalking and burglary, as well as exposing himself in the presence of a child, after the neighbor's 3-year-old daughter saw him lying naked on a lawn chair by the pool.

Lepeska allegedly told police that he was in love with the tennis star and desperate to meet her.

Angela Robertson, a Miami-Dade public defender representing Lepeska, did not immediately return a phone message Tuesday.

Ivy Mollenkamp, the tennis player's publicist, said in a statement that the arrest "has caused Anna to be very concerned and fearful for her safety."

Lepeska told police he spent months searching for Kournikova's address on the Internet. He sent her numerous letters and e-mails, and told police he believed Kournikova had left a door unlocked and laid out clothing for him.

Miami-Dade County Court Judge Gerald Klein issued a restraining order against Lepeska on Friday. Lepeska is currently being held in the county jail on a $26,000 bail.

Kournikova's attorneys, Dan Gelber and Steve Chaykin, did not immediately return phone messages Tuesday.

The Russian star was the first pin-up girl of tennis, a role now filled by talented compatriot Maria Sharapova. *AP*

KOURNIKOVA

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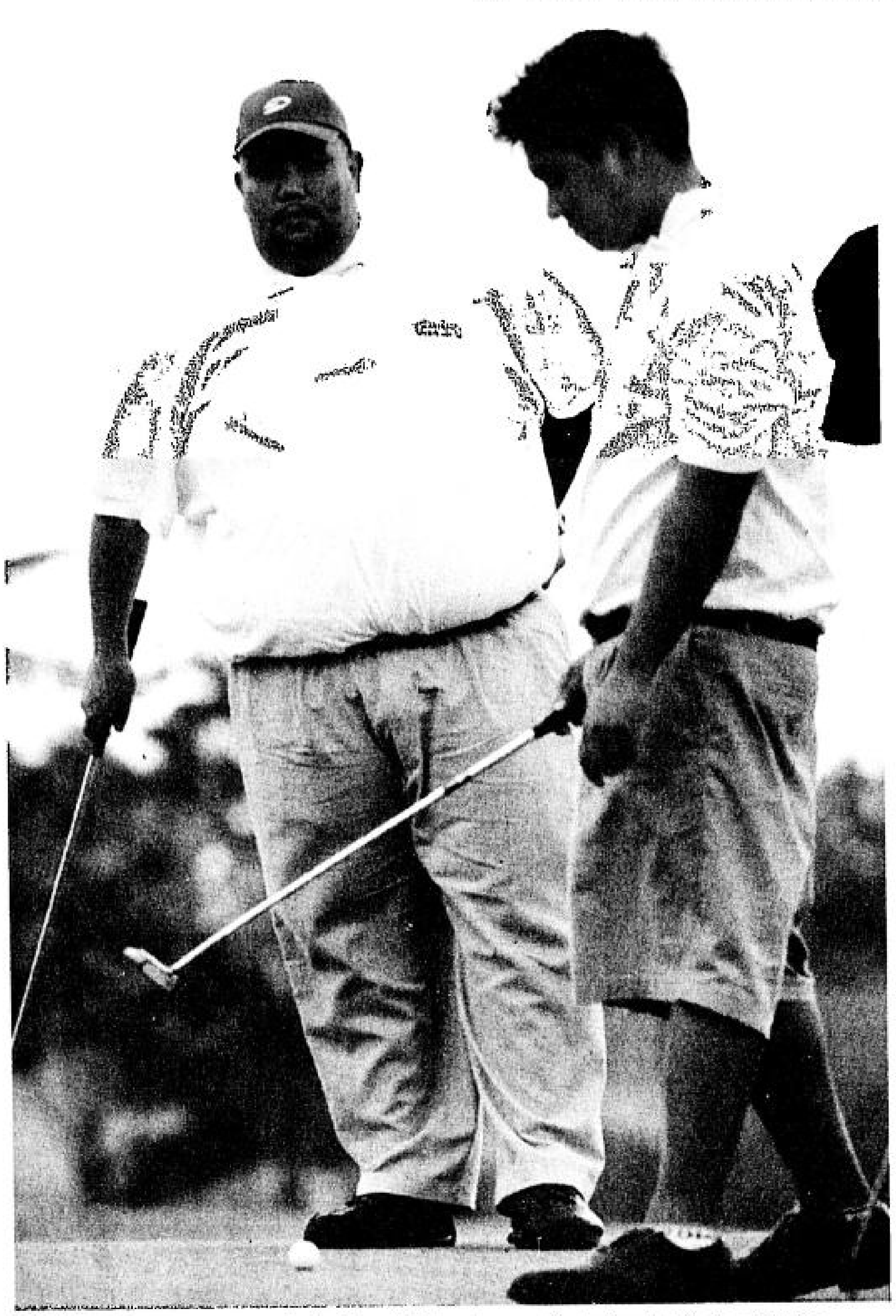


TEAMMATES Gerard Cantada (left) and JR Tanpinco confer during the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am at Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite.

JESS YUSON

Reigning titlists, Pucay-Roy pace Konica Pro-Am

By Musong R. Castillo

SILANG, Cavite—The defending champion Gerard Cantada–JR Tanpinco tandem fired a one-over 72 over a wind-swept Langer course yesterday for a share of the lead after 18 holes of the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am.

Cantada-Tanpinco came back strong on the back side, closing out with a 33 highlighted by three straight birdies from the 10th, to take a piece of the lead with the Mars Pucay-Jose Roy partnership.

Pucay and Roy also had a 38 on the front nine but birdied four times coming home to keep Cantada and Tanpinco company at the top, one stroke up on Solomon Gines and Artemio Murakami.

The team of Gines and the flamboyant Murakami took advantage of the relative morning calm to assemble a 73 in the tournament sponsored by Konica Minolta business technologies and the U-Bix Corp.

"JR and I just want to have fun out there," said the 27-year-old Cantada.

Koreans Jae Ying and Lee Seung-hoon stood fourth after a 74 even as Ruel Banares and Marvin Dumandan, the runner-up last year, managed a 75 on their home course for solo fifth.

Marlon Dizon and Ruben dela Rosa shot a 76, Rey Pagunsan and Bobby Iñigo turned in a 77 like Lito and Elmer Saban, while Tae Keun Na and Seo Jae Lee and Rene Gaviola and John Kier Abdon assembled identical 78s to round out the top 10.

Meanwhile, Oscar Colminas, an obscure teaching pro, scored his first ace on the 156-yard 17th hole with a pitching wedge.

He was not able to drive home the Toyota Hi-Lux staked for a hole-in-one, though, because it was designated to be won on the No. 4.

"It's my first hole-in-one in 28 years," said Colminas in Filipino. "It's okay if I don't bring home the pick-up."

Instead, Colminas will receive a round trip ticket to the United States from Asiana Airlines, P10,000 cash and P5,000 worth of food and another P5,000 worth of equipment and golf accessories from the Riviera pro shop.

Other backers are Riso, Epson, Brother Office, Casio, Okamura, Planex Network, ServiceMaster, Terminix, Merry Maids, Grappa's Ristorante, Café Appasionato, Pivo Praha, Pagcor, Mizuno, DHL-WWW Express, PSC, Bravo Golf and Rowell Group.

De Mesa, guest top Bill Shaw Memorial

ANTONIO de Mesa and his guest partner, Rodolfo Manuel, combined for a two-day score of 196 to emerge as overall champion in the recent 16th Bill Shaw Memorial Golf Tournament at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Cl ub in Mandaluyong City.

De Mesa and Manuel carded an aggregate net of 134 at the west course and assembled a 62 in scramble play the next day to show up the 200 teams which took part in the 36-hole tourney presented by Samsung Electronics Phils., Northwest Airlines and Globe Telecom.

Gary Go and Damas Wong won the low gross plum for the second straight year. They shot a 153 in aggregate and 70 in scramble play for a 223 total.

More than P5 million in prizes were given away, the bulk of which were the hole-in-one prizes put up by Northwest Airlines, Toyota Balintawak, Toyota Motor Philippines, Mitsubishi Motors Phils. Corp. and Union Motors Phils., Kart Plaza, Kymco World Inc. and Asian Therapeutics Inc.—OSIM (GNC Products).

Major sponsors were Philippine Airlines, Pacsports, the First Gentleman Foundation, Unilever Phils. and San Miguel Corp. Boysen, Sta. Elena Properties, Splash Corp., Pagcor and PCSO were premier sponsors.

Fernandina Suites, Discovery Suites, GG&A Clubshares, lawyer Gilberto Duavit, Equitable PCI Bank, IMMUVIT, Cathay Land, McDonalds Phils, Waterfront Hotel and Casino, AVESCO, Mc Home Depot, Liwayway Mktg. (Oishi), E.G. Ramos Mfg. Corp., Kubota, Citibank, Synergy Med Clinic, Prime Alcohol, Cost U Less, Arrow Shirts, Fort Ilocandia Resort and Hotel, Fortune Tobacco, China Bank, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Syber Solution, Zest-O, Godiva, Mister Donut, Shangri-La Plaza, Johnnie Walker, Absolute Mineral Water, Cinnabon, Electrobus Callaway, Red Ribbon and Syber Solution.

Club president Ben Abalos and sports and games chair Pablo Soon, who also headed the organizing committee, handed out the tournament and raffle awards.

Winning the division titles were Isaac Go-Louis Chan in Group I, Willy Ke-Kim Wong in Group II, Augusto de Jesus-Ken Grumley in Group III and Romulo Santos Jr.-Ernie Pilares in the seniors category. The Unilever tandem of Mon Dizon and Jake Joson ruled the sponsors category.

The results:

Overall: Antonio de Mesa-Rodolfo Manuel 134-62-196; **Low Gross**: Gary Go-Damas Wong 153-70-223; **Group I**: Isaac Go-Louis Chan 136-62-198, Ernesto Genato-Lino Magpantay 135-66-201, Manuel Sta. Cruz-Jun Puno 134-67-201; **Group II**: Willy Ke-Kim Wong 134-63-197, Adonis Baluyot-Victor Fernandez 136-62-198, Robert Yang-Johnny Litton 135-64-199; **Group III**: Augusto de Jesus-Ken Grumley 138-68-206, Edgar Gatchalian-Sixto Sengson 139-67-206, Francisco Liboro-Rene Lim 142-65-207; **Seniors**: Romulo Santos-Ernie Pilares 134-62-196, Cotoco Gonzalo-Archie Lacson 134-62, Arturo Co-Francis Siasat 138-62-200; **Sponsors**: Mon Dizon-Jake Joson 141-62-203, Roland Kapunan-Noel Plana 145-66, Ike Yusingco-Andy Hirone 146-66.

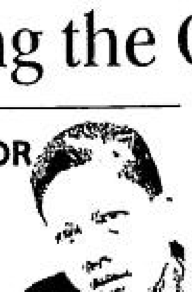
Moya triumphs

BUENOS AIRES—Top seed Carlos Moya enjoyed a straight-set win over qualifier Peter Luczak in the first round of the $380,000 Buenos Aires Open on Tuesday.

Moya, who won the first of his 18 ATP singles titles at the same tournament 10 years ago, beat the Australian, 6-3, 7-6, to earn a second-round match against Argentine Juan Monaco. Juan Ignacio Chela lost, 7-5, 6-1, to Marc Lopez. *Reuters*

Championing the Champions League

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

I MUST admit we have a lot, if not an oversupply, of basketball tournaments in this country. Wherever you look, you see one that is going on.

But that is not really surprising. We are a basketball country. That is ironic, but then, the Filipino race has always been a puzzle to the world.

We are short for the game of basketball but still, basketball has been our game since the Americans—Thomasites to be precise—brought the game to the country in 1900.

Football is the game in Asia, which is but right because football suits best the smaller people.

We don't give a damn to that, though. Basketball will always be our first love since Caloy Loyzaga put the Philippines in the world basketball map as a member of the Mythical Five in the World Championship (in 1954, in Rio de Janeiro, I guess?). It is said that first love never, ever dies.

So now, starting tomorrow, we will have the third Collegiate Champions League. This one is good because it will feature the stars of college basketball, which means they are the prime source of the country's future superstars of the game.

That has been an oft-repeated line but it needs to be said here again if only to emphasize the true character of the Champions League.

The list of schools alone looks impressive.

For one, the participants are the Top 16 schools of college basketball not only in Luzon but also in the Visayas and Mindanao, a testament to the Champions League's commitment to quality performances.

For another, the Champions League has laid down a cutthroat format whereby any team that gets beaten during the two-week tournament gets automatically knocked out of the competition, ensuring for a fierce brand of competition from start to finish.

Just taking a look at the roster of schools entered makes me feel like thrilled to the bones—reigning champion Far Eastern University, Champions League inaugural winner University of the East, defending NCAA champion Philippine Christian University, University of Perpetual Help, Letran, San Beda, University of the Philippines, NCR champions University of Manila and Emilio Aguinaldo College and Ateneo. From the Visayas and Mindanao are powerhouse teams University of Visayas, San Jose Recoletos and University of Southern Philippines, and the champions of Davao and Negros.

This looks to me like "The Gunfight at OK Corral"—all are fast draws. One miss, you die. The first to blink falls.

I am saddened, though, by the withdrawal of La Salle, the reining UAAP champion. It begged off at the last minute, citing a "crowded schedule for the year."

Still, I foresee a resounding success for this tournament, a brainchild of Joe Lipa who, in my book, is the undisputed theoretician of the game.

Set at the San Beda (Mendiola) and Ateneo (Katipunan) gyms in its Manila schedule (five days), the Champions League has two playing dates scheduled in Cebu.

One beauty of this tournament, which will be aired over NBN 4, is that it will give P500,000 to the champion, P150,000 to the runner-up and P100,000 to the third placer.

That is a whopping incentive for our participants. The money will be earmarked for the winning schools' sports development program. Thus, it can be said that the Champions League will hit two birds with one stone: One, discover the future stars of the land; and two, continue to search for new ones as the money prizes will see to that.

Yes, we see basketball tournaments left and right, but I won't mind the addition of another if it's the Champions League we're talking about.

Quality is always welcomed.

Passion
TOYOTA
soon
GLOBAL QUALITY PROJECT

Pets as stars and loving housemates

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

PET lovers here should be pleased to know that the Animal Planet channel has all sorts of interesting shows about our furry, winged and "fishy" friends.

We've enjoyed viewing programs like "Vets on the Wild Side," "Animals A-Z," "Animal Precinct," "Weird Nature," "Pet Powers" and "Monkey Business."

But the show we really dote on is "Pet Star," a "talent" program for pets of all sorts, from dogs to pigs, from groundhogs to pudding-eating rats!

All of those "talented" animals competed for the top weekly prize last Friday at 2 p.m. on the entertaining and informative cable channel, and we made it a point to watch the program last Friday from beginning to end.

Just like other talent searches on TV, "Pet Star" has its contestants (accompanied by their doting humans, of course) going through their paces, and then being evaluated by a panel of judges.

The jurors pick the best three contestants, and then the studio audience votes on the best of the best. The weekly winner then goes on to higher levels of competition, until the grand champion is chosen.

Judging from the telecast last Friday, there are a lot of really gifted animal performers out there, and they're really enthusiastic, focused and cute, to boot!—That's more than we can say for some of those self-centered and self-deluding human nontalents auditioning for "American Idol," you bet!

More than 10 trick-performing pets competed on Feb. 4. Some of the standouts were a groundhog that raised a mini version of the American flag; a dog that caught a frisbee while executing a back-flip over another dog; a rat that ate pudding out of its young owner's mouth (not a great talent, but definitely a unique act); a pig that executed its version of a football touchdown; a dog that got tissue for its sneezing human—etc.!

Some of the tricks were really challenging, but what impressed us most of all was the great rapport and love evident between the pets and their humans.

The pets' owners behaved differently from professional animal trainers because of their more personal approach, and it was touching to see how well the pets executed their tricks because they wanted to please their owners.

So, the judges were quite right, the show's prizes and honors should go to the *teams* of pets and humans who do exceptionally well in the weekly competition.

We trust that this isn't lost on the viewers out there who may be treating their pets shabbily. "Pet Star" on Animal Planet should convince them that their pets do deserve to be stars, or at least beloved helpmeets, in their own lives.

Movies on TV

ON HBO, Feb. 11 at 9 :45 a.m., "The Ring." 11:45 a.m., "The Remains of the Day." 7:05 p.m., "Multiplicity." 9 p.m., "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets." 11:35 p.m., "Analyze That." Feb. 12 at 2:10 p.m., "Babe." 3:40 p.m., "White Oleander." 9 p.m., "Cat in the Hat."

On Cinemax, Feb. 11 at 8:45 a.m., "Altered States." 6:30 p.m., "Scent of A Woman." Feb. 12 at 10 a.m., "The Age of Innocence." 9 p.m., "Mad Dog and Glory." 10:30 p.m., "Empire of the Sun."

'New Beginnings'

THE ST. John Bosco Chorale performs at 8 p.m. on Feb. 18 at the Francisco Santiago Hall of Equitable PCI Bank Tower 1, Makati ave. The chorale's concert, "New Beginnings," features memorable songs like "Longer," "Eres Tu," "Power of Two," "When You believe," "Anak," "Ngayon" and "Bituing Walang Ningning." Lester Delgado conducts. Call 810-1059.

'Into the Unknown'

EVERY Sunday at 6:30 p.m., Adventure One Channel screens "Into the Unknown." The adventure series sends viewers hurtling off on adrenalin-fueled journeys that span the globe.

The locations range from the frozen Arctic Sea, the Christ statue in Rio de Janeiro, to the desolate Tibetan Plateau.

SOME dogs deserve stardom.

Where your heart will be

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

VALENTINE'S Day is a few heartbeats away. Do you know where your heart will be? Cupid must have Filipino blood in him because he never fails to hit Pinoys' hearts every time Feb. 14 comes around. We are known to have the longest Christmas celebration in the world. It should also be said that Filipinos commemorate Valentine's Day with the most passion. It's almost like a national holiday for us true blue romantics.

Valentine's may seem overly commercialized; still we find ourselves joining in the frenzy. Buying those roses... wrapping those chocolates... braving the traffic jam to catch the countless V-day concerts... wearing red for the pure love of it.

In the spirit of V-day, I asked some stars what's the most daring thing they did in the name of love and what romantic quotes their hearts heed. As *pour moi*, I always dare my heart to keep loving like hurt never existed. The quote I live and love by is: "Love is delicate but the strength of one shields the other." How about you? Think about it. When your mind is in your heart then you are all set to have the happiest Valentine's ever!!

Chin-chin Gutierrez: I dared to discover, know and love our indigenous soul—took three years of journeying from the Cordillera mountains of the North to the hinterlands of Mindanao. We each have a beautiful Filipino soul. If our country were a woman, any man would be lovesick for her!

The love quote I adhere to is from Kahlil Gibran: "To wake at dawn with a

WHERE/ A27

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PIOLO PASCUAL
BEA ALONZO
DREAMBOY

OPENS THIS WEEK

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
MTRCB RATING: G

ALFIE
Subject to MTRCB RATING

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Subject to MTRCB RATING

LET THE LOVE BEGIN
Subject to MTRCB RATING

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SALSA
MTRCB Rating: PG13

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11:10 FS/ 11:35 MF / 1:50 / 4:05 /6:20
8:35 / 10:30 LFS / 10:50 LMF / 12:45 END

2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
11:20 FS / 11:50 MF / 2:35 / 5:20
8:05 / 10:25 LFS / 10:50 LMF / 1:10/ END

METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
5 ALFIE
6 ELEKTRA
7 KUNFU HUSTLE
8 MEET THE FOCKERS
9 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
10 DREAMBOY
11 SHALL WE DANCE
12 SALSA

sm city fairview
1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 ELEKTRA
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
5 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
6 DREAMBOY
7 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
9 WITHOUT THE PADDLE
10 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
11 KUNG FU HUSTLE
12 MAD HOUSE

sm city north edsa
1 ELEKTRA
2 DREAMBOY
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 MEET THE FOCKERS
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
7 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

sm city manila
1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 ELEKTRA
3 ALFIE
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
7 SHALL WE DANCE
8 BLADE TRINITY
9 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
10 MAD HOUSE
11 DREAMBOY
12 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city sta. mesa
1 DREAMBOY
2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
6 MEET THE FOCKERS
7 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
8 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
9 DREAMBOY
10 ELEKTRA

sm city southmall
1 WITHOUT THE PADDLE
2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5 MEET THE FOCKERS
6 SHALL WE DANCE
7 DREAMBOY
8 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
9 ELEKTRA
10 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city bicutan
1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 DREAMBOY
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 ELEKTRA
2 DREAMBOY
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 DREAMBOY
2 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
3 MAD HOUSE
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 ELEKTRA
6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

sm city baguio
1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN KUNG
3 FU HUSTLE
4 DREAMBOY

sm city batangas
1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 DREAMBOY
4 SHALL WE DANCE

sm city dasmariñas
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 DREAMBOY

sm city marilao
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 ELEKTRA
3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 DREAMBOY

sm city bacoor
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 ELEKTRA
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
6 DREAMBOY
7 WITHOUT A PADDLE
8 MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city lucena
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 ELEKTRA
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 ELEKTRA

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 SALSA
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
6 MAD HOUSE
7 DREAMBOY
8 ELEKTRA

sm city iloilo
1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 RESERVED
3 ELEKTRA
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
6 DREAMBOY
7 RESERVED
8 RACING STRIPES

sm city davao
1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 HELLWOLF
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 ELEKTRA
5 DREAMBOY
6 NED KELLY

sm city cagayan de oro
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 DREAMBOY
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

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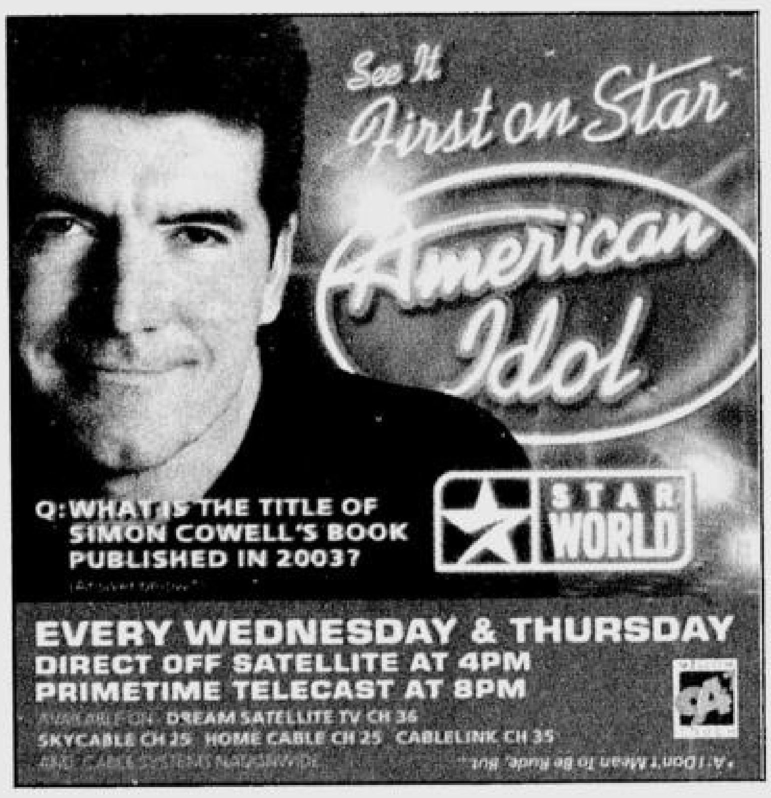

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4 PM, Playzone
Going Bulilit Mall Show
Presented by: ABS-CBN

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Hosted by: Jolina Magdangal and Dingdong Dantes
7 PM - 8 PM, Activity Center

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MARQUEZ

Where your heart will be

From page A26

winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving; to rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy; to return home at eventide with gratitude; And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips. Love gives not but itself and takes naught from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; for love is sufficient unto love."

Geneva Cruz: The most daring thing I've done for love so far is to skydive with KC (Montero) on a TV show recently just because he didn't think I could pull it off. But I did... alone!

It may sound cliché but I really believe that, in love, where there's a will, there's a way. If a guy really loves you he will move heaven and earth to be with you. No ifs or buts!

Karylle: I haven't done anything that daring for love—not yet, anyway. Maybe when I get older and love strikes hard.

My fave love saying is from the Book of Corinthians. "Love is not jealous." I believe that so much. I don't get jealous when I have a boyfriend, and I feel he shouldn't get jealour either because I'm a faithful girlfriend!

Rannie Raymundo: I must say that the most daring thing I have done for love is to get married. What could be more daring than that?

I created my own love quote, which sums it all up for me: "The concept of true love is a thing of terrifying beauty!"

Melanie Marquez: Deciding to be an unwed mom for the first time—to have **Manuelito**, the son of **Lito Lapid**—is the most daring thing I did for love. It's been tough, but no regrets. When you do something out of love, you should never regret it, or blame anyone.

"Let bygones be bygones" is the love quote I bear in mind in all my relationships. Where there is love there should be forgiveness.

For feedback e-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaith-band.com.

KARYLLE

SeeᵉMall!

AYALA CINEMAS

THX

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ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
1 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	5 SHALL WE DANCE	GUARANTEED SEATS 1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	1 DREAMBOY
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	6 DREAMBOY	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 DREAMBOY	3 ELEKTRA	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	7 ALFIE	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT	3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 SHALL WE DANCE	4 DREAMBOY	4 MEET THE FOCKERS		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 SHALL WE DANCE	4 MADHOUSE
5 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 DREAMBOY	5

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 DREAMBOY

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
Valentine Show Featuring Side A February 13, 2005	Valentines' Serenade at Food Establishments February 12-14 2005	A Book Bug's A Bunch of Treat for Heart February 11, 2005

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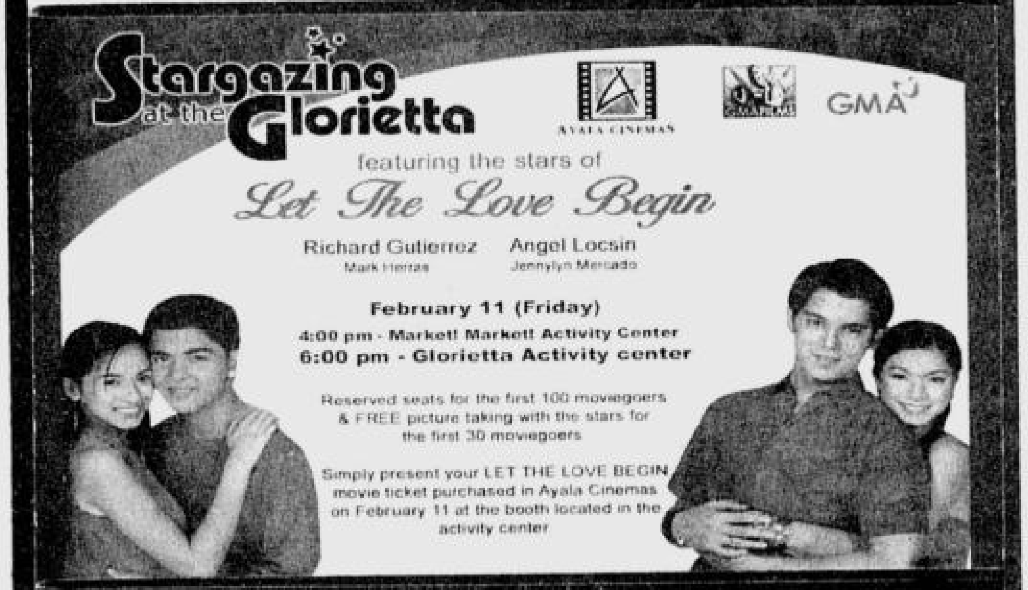

Stargazing at the Glorietta

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Let The Love Begin

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Angel Locsin — Jennylyn Mercado

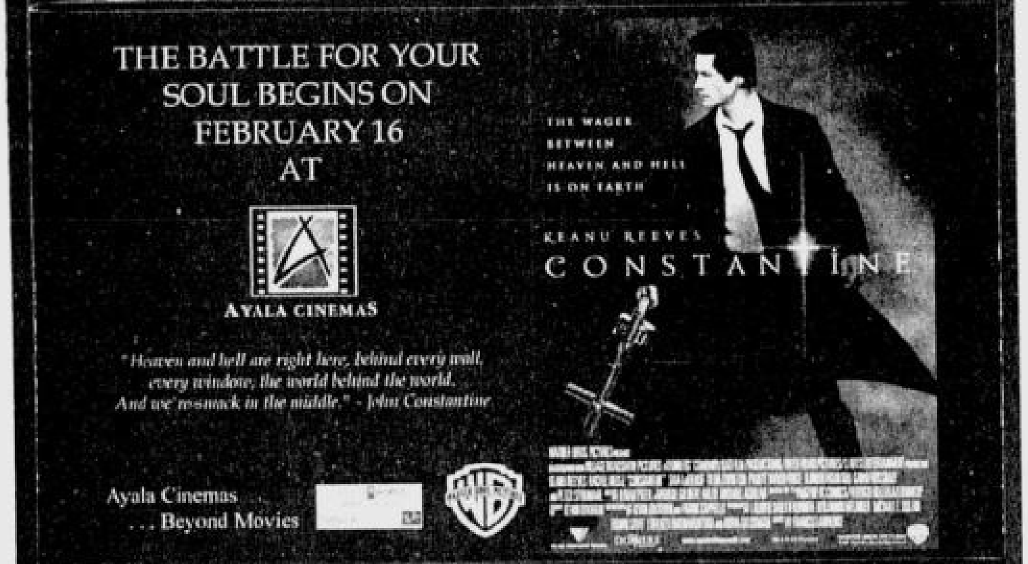
February 11 (Friday)

4:00 pm - Market! Market! Activity Center

6:00 pm - Glorietta Activity center

Reserved seats for the first 100 moviegoers & FREE picture taking with the stars for the first 30 moviegoers

Simply present your LET THE LOVE BEGIN movie ticket purchased in Ayala Cinemas on February 11 at the booth located in the activity center



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KEANU REEVES
CONSTANTINE

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Ms. Bituin Escalante
February 12 8 pm
Greenbelt 3 Park

SIDE A Band
February 13 5 pm
Glorietta Activity Center

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

Jazz music, string quartets and flowers await all diners
February 12 to 14

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Jose Mari Chan
February 14 8 pm
Lagoon Area

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 SHALL WE DANCE • THX	6 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	7 ELEKTRA
3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	8 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
4 ALFIE	9 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 DREAMBOY	10 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	5 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
3 SHALL WE DANCE	6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 ALFIE	7 DREAMBOY

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 SHALL WE DANCE	5 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 10:25 1:25 4:25 7:25 10:30
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	6 DREAMBOY 11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:15
3 MEET THE FOCKERS	7 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 ELEKTRA	8 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	5 DREAMBOY
2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	6 SHALL WE DANCE
3 ELEKTRA	7 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	8 WITHOUT A PADDLE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	4 DREAMBOY

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575	CAINTA 240-4661
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 DREAMBOY	2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	3 SHALL WE DANCE
4 DREAMBOY	4 DREAMBOY

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1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
3 ELEKTRA	3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE	4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 DREAMBOY	5 DREAMBOY

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332	ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 ELEKTRA	2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON	3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	4 DREAMBOY
5 DREAMBOY	

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188	STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270
1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
2 ELEKTRA	2 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 DREAMBOY	4 DREAMBOY
5 WITHOUT A PADDLE	5 MEET THE FOCKERS
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13	6 MADHOUSE

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459	ILOILO (033) 336-8070
1 DREAMBOY	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 RAISE YOUR VOICE	2 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 KUNG FU HUTSLE	4 DREAMBOY
5 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT	5 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
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SUSPENDED!
Booba gets Laguardia's goat

By Marinel R. Cruz

TELEVIEWERS will be seeing less of the antics of Ethel Booba, one of the hosts of "Extra Challenge," this month. The show's producers suspended the comedian after the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board complained about the "excessively sexy" outfits she wore on TV.

Ethel has been prohibited from appearing in any GMA 7 show other than "Extra Challenge" from Feb. 1 to Feb. 28, according to a letter that network program management head Jose Mari Abacan sent to the MTRCB.

"We are taking this action in connection with the complaints regarding Ms Booba's attire on 'All Star K' last Jan. 30," Abacan said.

MTRCB chair Marissa Laguardia noted that Ethel violated the "PG" classification allowed for TV.

The comedian's outfit on said show was "inappropriate" because the neckline was too low and exposed almost her entire breast, Laguardia told Inquirer Entertainment on Tuesday.

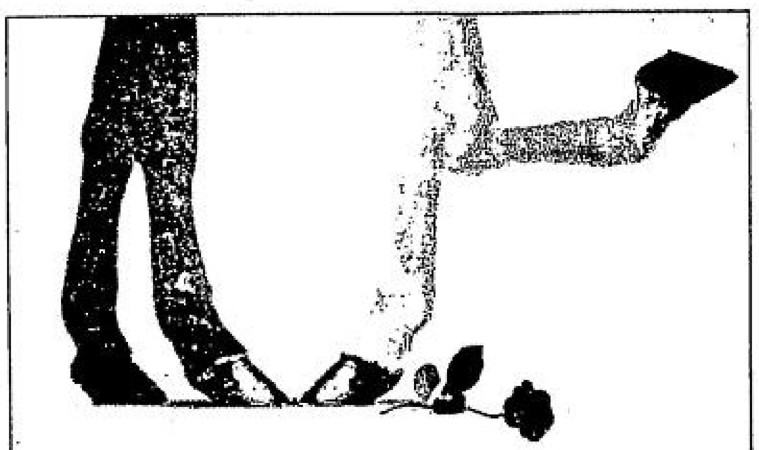
The suspension was Ethel's second. The producers did not allow her to appear in the Dec. 8 episode of "Extra Challenge" because she had worn similarly suggestive outfits in previous episodes. Laguardia had met the day before with Ethel, Abacan, and production unit manager Margie Natividad, to discuss the sanction.

Ethel apologized afterwards, Laguardia said, but "she was not sincere ... she did it again."

The MTRCB chair said Ethel blamed her designer and producers for the sexy outfits. "Ethel said they provided the clothes that she used on the show. We even talked with her designer to make sure that the violation would not be repeated."

As for her clothes on "All Star K," Laguardia said, "She has no more excuse. She picked those clothes herself. I told Mr. Abacan not to bring Ethel to the MTRCB office again."

Last October, the censors warned Zsa Zsa, host of "Born Diva" on ABS-CBN, and Regine, of "Pinoy Pop Superstar" on GMA 7, for wearing "improper" outfits on TV.



Carriage rides at Rockwell from Feb. 12-13.

Other Highlights:
Flowers, Chocolates, Gifts and Serenades

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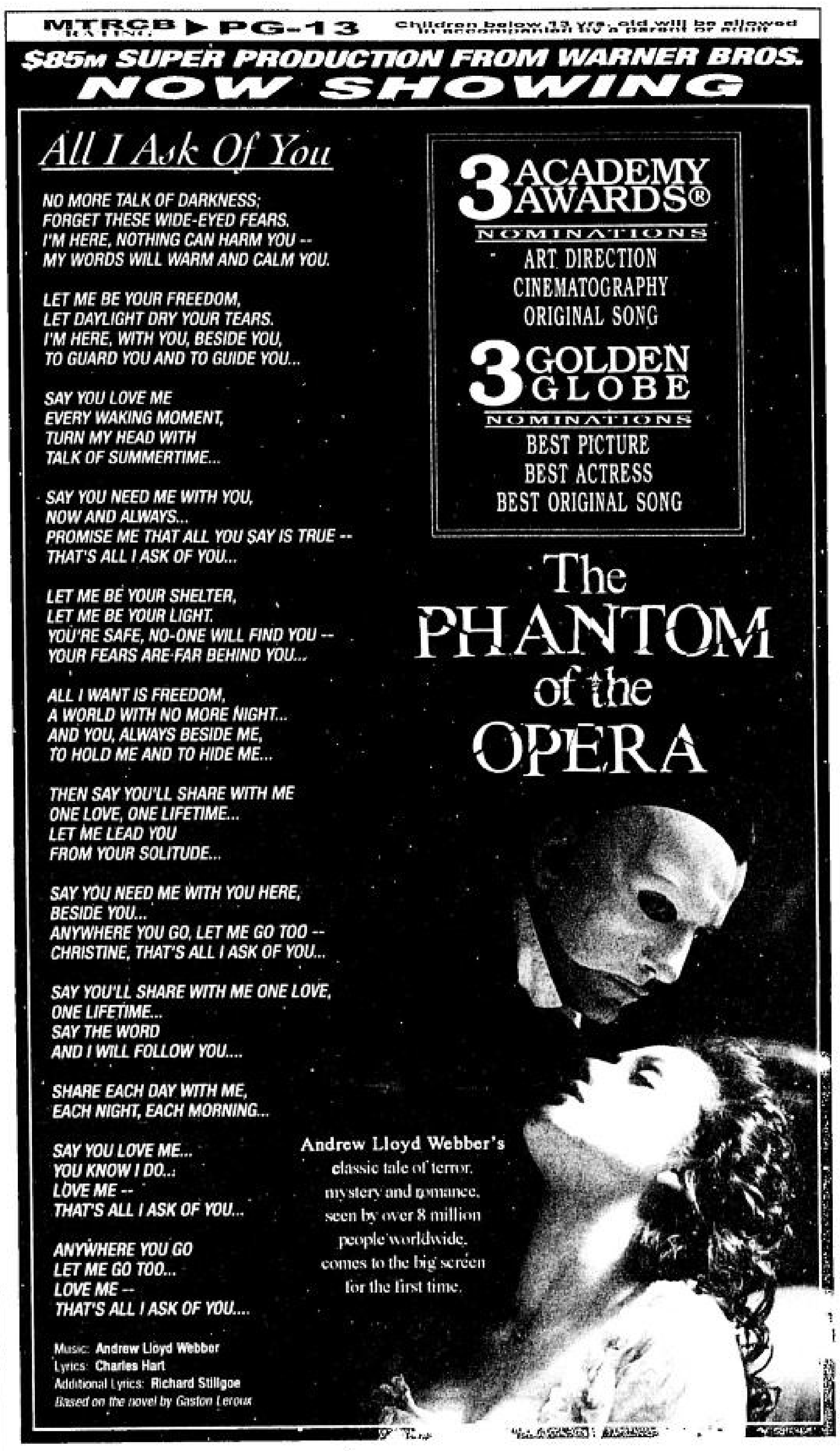

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EVERY WAKING MOMENT,
TURN MY HEAD WITH
TALK OF SUMMERTIME...

SAY YOU NEED ME WITH YOU,
NOW AND ALWAYS...
PROMISE ME THAT ALL YOU SAY IS TRUE --
THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

LET ME BE YOUR SHELTER,
LET ME BE YOUR LIGHT.
YOU'RE SAFE, NO-ONE WILL FIND YOU --
YOUR FEARS ARE FAR BEHIND YOU...

ALL I WANT IS FREEDOM,
A WORLD WITH NO MORE NIGHT...
AND YOU, ALWAYS BESIDE ME,
TO HOLD ME AND TO HIDE ME...

THEN SAY YOU'LL SHARE WITH ME
ONE LOVE, ONE LIFETIME...
LET ME LEAD YOU
FROM YOUR SOLITUDE...

SAY YOU NEED ME WITH YOU HERE,
BESIDE YOU...
ANYWHERE YOU GO, LET ME GO TOO --
CHRISTINE, THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

SAY YOU'LL SHARE WITH ME ONE LOVE,
ONE LIFETIME...
SAY THE WORD
AND I WILL FOLLOW YOU....

SHARE EACH DAY WITH ME,
EACH NIGHT, EACH MORNING...

SAY YOU LOVE ME...
YOU KNOW I DO...
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THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

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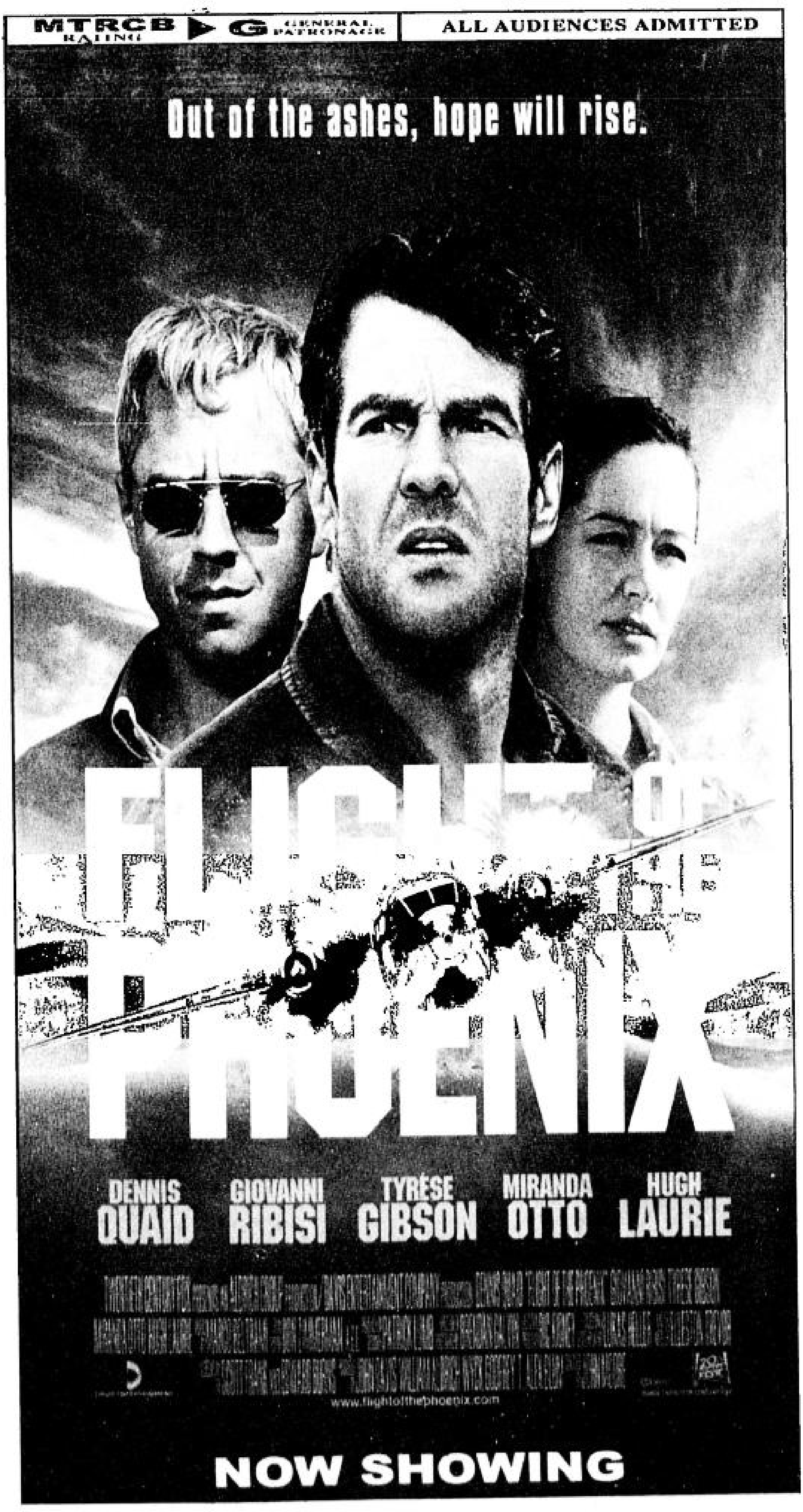

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-Harper Barnes, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
"Spiked with nerve-jangling energy."
-Robert Denerstein, ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS
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-Jack Garner, ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT
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'Matrix' Laurence Fishburne is brilliantly ruthless." -MAXIM MAGAZINE
ETHAN HAWKE
LAURENCE FISHBURNE
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Mirant revives plan to go public

By Abigail L. Ho

SEEING how well the Philippine Stock Exchange has been performing lately, Mirant Philippines Corp. is bent on going public within this year.

Quoting Marcie Fuller, president and chief executive of Mirant Philippines' parent firm Mirant Corp., Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said the country's biggest independent power producer was seriously considering conducting an initial public offering some time soon.

"During Marcie Fuller's courtesy call (at Malacañang) last week, she reiterated her desire (for Mirant) to go public. She said she would consider it seriously. It's only a matter of time. Her keen desire is to have it within the year," he said.

The power firm had earlier said it would list a 10-percent stake on the local bourse.

Perez said that with the stock exchange performing "exceptionally well" as of late, it would come as no surprise if more energy firms would consider listing their shares soon.

"This may be as good a time as any for energy companies to float (their shares) at the (Philippine Stock Exchange," he said.

The recent listing of 46.9 million additional shares by local large-scale coal producer Semirara Mining Corp., he said, was seen to boost the interest of firms engaged in oil exploration, geothermal energy and power to do their own initial public offerings.

The PSE has been trying to coax oil major Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and power firms Mirant Philippines and First Generation Holdings Corp. to go public.

While all of them had earlier expressed their intention to go public, particularly as this was required of them by law, the bearish performance of the local bourse in the past had hindered them from doing so.

Perez expressed confidence that the recent bullish behavior of the market would encourage them to finally list their shares.

While waiting for other energy-related firms to make their move, however, he said the government could also take the lead through an IPO by Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp.

PNOC-EDC is in the process of selecting a financial adviser that will help facilitate its privatization efforts.

PNOC-EDC will be floating 6 billion shares for private placement.

The firm will be following the privatization model of Petron

MIRANT/ B3

SMC to buy Malaysian ice cream company

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN Miguel Corp., Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage conglomerate, said it was buying 76.4 percent of a Malaysian ice cream company for roughly $5 million or P271 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, San Miguel said it had agreed to acquire the holdings of Star Fortune Inc. and H&Q Ventures II Ltd. in King's Creameries Pte. Ltd.

Malaysian Dairy Industries Private Ltd. (MDI), a Singapore-based dairy manufacturer, owns the remaining 23.62 percent in King's Creameries.

The Malaysian company is touted as among the top four ice cream players in Malaysia and Singapore. Its products range from bulk or tub kinds and single-serve novelties. Its major brands include King's, Dairy Best and N'Joy.

The company also produces other ice cream brands under toll arrangements.

The acquisition is part of San Miguel's regional expansion strategy to boost its business and product portfolio across the Asia-Pacific region.

The acquisition would also give San Miguel a strong position in the region's growing dairy industry and provide immediate entry into the Malaysian and Singaporean ice cream market.

San Miguel is studying the possibility of ice cream production in the region after it relaunched last year its Magnolia ice cream brand, one of the most recognizable and enduring brands in the Philippines.

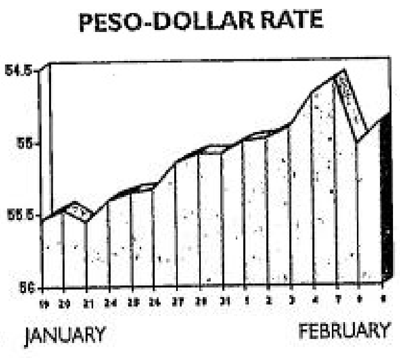
In the 1960s, Nestlé S.A. of Switzerland and San Miguel formed a joint-venture company dubbed Nestlé Philippines Inc. San Miguel later sold its 45-percent stake in the joint venture to Nestlé S.A., but retained ownership of the Magnolia brand. Under the terms of the sale to Nestle S.A. was a non-compete clause which prevented SMC from entering into the ice cream business for five years. This expired in 2003.

"The option and opportunity for San Miguel to reenter the market is open, as in the minds of consumers, Magnolia ice cream never left the market. People have always known Magnolia as a quality brand of ice cream. Loyalty to the brand is strong because it is part of our heritage," SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. had said.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱ 54.88 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 9, 2005

¥ 105.39 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 9, 2005

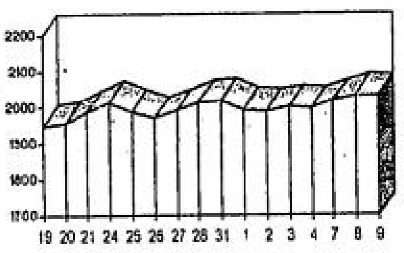
GOLD: $ 414.00-414.50
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 8, 2005

February 9, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.783147	1.000000	54.8250
Japan	Yen	0.007405	0.009456	0.5184
United Kingdom	Pound	1.452580	1.854800	101.6894
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100413	0.128217	7.0295
Switzerland	Franc	0.641293	0.818867	44.8944
Canada	Dollar	0.628377	0.802375	43.9902
Singapore	Dollar	0.475354	0.606980	33.2777
Australia	Dollar	0.598553	0.764292	41.9023
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.077367	2.652590	145.4282
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208839	0.266667	14.6200
Brunei	Dollar	0.473917	0.605144	33.1770
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000108	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.020323	0.025950	1.4227
UAE	Dirham	0.213234	0.272279	14.9277
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.276900	70.0060
Argentina	Peso	0.268661	0.343053	18.8079
Brazil	Real	0.297662	0.380084	20.8381
Denmark	Kroner	0.134388	0.171600	9.4080
India	Rupee	0.017970	0.022946	1.2580
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.206119	0.263193	14.4296
Mexico	New Peso	0.069912	0.089270	4.8942
New Zealand	Dollar	0.547349	0.698910	38.3177
Norway	Kroner	0.119247	0.152267	8.3480
Korea	Won	0.000756	0.000965	0.0529
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024654	0.031481	1.7259

STOCK MARKET

Shares end flat as market consolidates

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES closed flat yesterday as investors chose to lighten their holdings and stay on the sidelines ahead of fresh buying incentives, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended down 1.22 points, or 0.1 percent, at 2028.86, after rising 1.7 percent in the past two sessions, including Tuesday's 0.7 percent gain to 2030.08, its best close in five years.

The commercial-industrial, and property sub-indexes finished lower, while the all shares, banks and financial services, mining, and oil sub-indicators ended higher. Gainers led decliners 72 to 37, while 27 stocks were unchanged.

The total volume of shares traded was 2.03 billion valued at P1.02 billion, from Tuesday's 2.69 billion shares worth P1.93 billion.

Limiting the market loss were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., up 0.4 percent at P1,410, Metropolitan Bank, which gained 3 percent to P35.50 and First Holdings, which climbed 2.3 percent to P44.50.

"There was a retracement after the market index yesterday broke its recent high of around 2024, and now the market is consolidating above that level," said Westlink Global Equities chair Rommel Macapagal.

AP

China firm looks into Benguet, Zambales mine sites

THE METALLURGICAL and Construction Group of China (MCC) last week signed a memorandum of agreement with local mining firms Benguet Corp. and Eramen Minerals Inc. for the conduct of a due-diligence study on the companies' nickel properties in Zambales.

In a statement, the Philippine Chamber of Mines said the two nickel properties got the interest of Chinese and Japanese groups due to their 1.5-percent nickel and 0.05-percent cobalt resource grading.

With the MOA between MCC and the two local mining firms in place, the two Zambales properties could possibly be explored and developed using the technical know-how and financial muscle of the state-owned Chinese firm.

The exploration and development of the Benguet and Eramen properties would entail a huge amount of capital, something that the Chinese state firm could help provide.

Around $800 million to $1 billion is required to construct a nickel processing plant, with a capacity to produce between 30,000 tons and 50,000 tons of nickel ore, at the site.

MCC could help make the construction of the nickel processing plant possible.

"As China's economy continues to grow, its expanding industry is predicted to have a strong requirement for refined nickel in the years to come," the Chamber of Mines said.

The MCC-Benguet-Eramen MOA came as a result of two memoranda of understanding (MOU) that the country, through the departments of Trade and Industry and of Environment and Natural Resources, signed with the China Ministry of Commerce and China Metallurgical Construction (Group) Corp. or CMCGC.

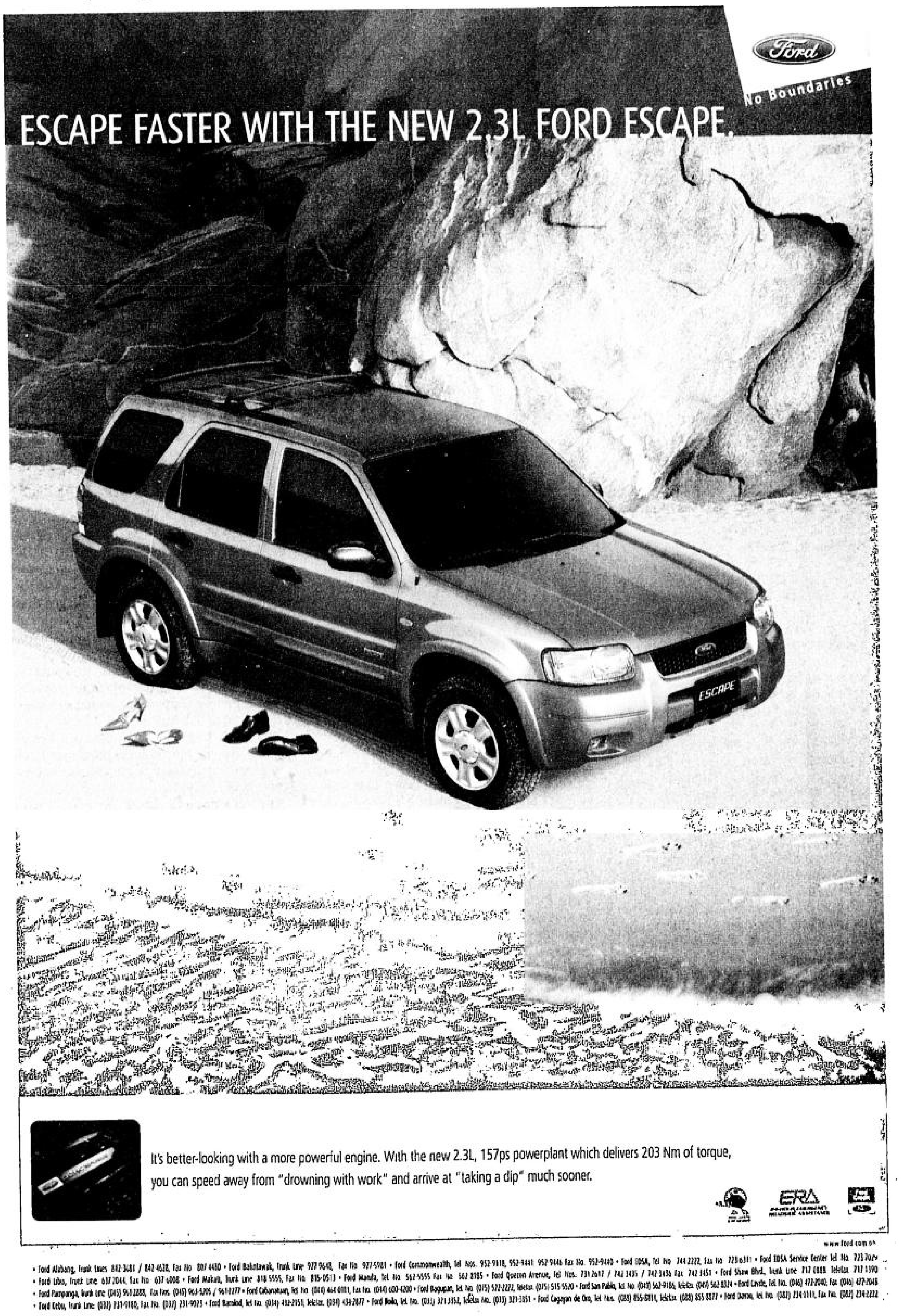
Under the MOU, CMCGC, through its chair Yang Changheng, committed to infuse $100 million into various Philippine mining projects.

The MOU was signed during the Chamber of Mines-led Philippine mining roadshow in China last month.

Abigail L. Ho

INTEREST RATES

February 9, 2005-MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART 1 9-Feb-05	MART 1 8-Feb-05
1 Month	6.9893	6.9893
3 Months	7.0117	6.9821
6 Months	7.95	7.8983
1 Year	8.7983	8.7283
2 Years	9.4786	9.1717
3 Years	10.265	9.9837
4 Years	10.9	10.535
5 Years	11.2733	10.9173
7 Years	11.9933	11.7767
10 Years	12.5133	12.3467
20 Years	13.0933	12.945
25 Years	14.15	13.995



It's better-looking with a more powerful engine. With the new 2.3L, 157ps powerplant which delivers 203 Nm of torque, you can speed away from "drowning with work" and arrive at "taking a dip" much sooner.
www.ford.com.ph

No such thing as a free launch

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IT is high time that we, as a people, resolve once and for all whether our very own "barong" goes well with brown shoes.

I think it is an issue of…how shall I put it…well, incalculable national significance.

For one, "barong" on brown shoes must be worth the attention of our beloved senators, who each get more than P200 million in pork from our tax money every year.

That's only the money that the government forcibly takes away from our hard-earned pay every month.

Another issue is, of course, the fondness of our public officials for anything that's supposedly "free," because in the real world, there is no such thing as a free lunch.

***

IN the ICT business—a buzzword of this cute administration, together with "call center" and "instant noodle,"—people wonder what happened to some 200 or so costly computers.

Not too long ago, you see, when the DTI was still under Korina San…, *este*, Sen. Mar Roxas, this cute administration distributed computers to public schools.

The money for the computers did not come from our tax money. They were financed by a grant from the Japanese government. In return for what, only they know.

From what I gathered, those computers are still not running. Well, they did not have the software to make them run, that's why.

Usually, if you buy a computer, it comes loaded with the programs. This cute administration thought it could save money by buying only the hardware.

Based on the story in the ICT sector, this cute administration wanted to use the operating system called "Linux."

The software, supposedly, would be "free." This cute administration wouldn't pay for it, not even with a cross-eyed centavo of our tax money.

It turned out that the government had to spend a lot more money to make the computers work using the so-called "free" software. Result? The computers are turning into junk, proving once again, in computers, that there's no such thing as a free launch!

* * *

EVEN in Europe, government outfits that decided to switch to "Linux," thereby dropping "Windows," are rethinking their move.

It's because they found out that they would also spend money by using Linux, one way or another, and it would cost so much more than, say, staying with "Windows."

To make the "free" operating system run other programs, you have to use software that you can only buy from—what else—Linux.

But not only that, partner. Try visiting this website called "Zone H," which I reached at http://www.zone-h.org.

It's where computer hackers gloat about their exploits in cyberspace. Hackers are those whose idea of fun is getting into your pants…no, your computers.

According to the Zone H website, 19.2 percent of the attacks were against Windows, while an amazing 60 percent were against Linux.

And—get this—even government institutions were not spared. Three local websites were hacked.

One of them—would you believe—was the National Computer Center. Another was the Department of Science and Technology.

Another famous, enjoyable, beautiful and award-winning website, which Zone H claimed was hacked, was the INQ7.net.

Maybe the hackers just wanted to correct the wrong grammar in this column, but I really can't say.

* * *

FOR the life of me, I cannot understand why CAP, the headline grabbing College Assurance Plan, the country's biggest education plan company, is borrowing $300 million.

The cost of borrowing abroad is not exactly "free." In fact, it has gone up, thanks mainly to the recent downgrading of our credit rating.

After all, CAP technically does not need the money. It has more than P8 billion in its trust fund in several banks.

That alone can cover CAP's obligations to its existing plan holders over the next 10 years as they avail themselves of the scholarship under the plans.

I'm sure CAP has that kind of funding. I mean, it is a "trust fund," kept in several trustee banks. Not all of them will lie.

You may get one or two to lie for you, but not all.

And CAP itself says that the trust fund will grow to P28 billion in 10 years. This is even a conservative estimate.

As a rule of thumb, investments double every five years, and it's not even an aggressive investment strategy. I mean, you don't even have to put money in stocks like BW. Or Napocor bonds!

You just put money partly in T-bills, real estate and bonds. These are precisely where the CAP trust fund put its money.

In 10 years, that P8 billion can become P32 billion. In other words, CAP does not need the $300 million loan. The company is just borrowing it to please the SEC. And not even its plan holders! Just the SEC!

* * *

YOU see, upon former SEC chair Lilia Bautista's orders, CAP was told to raise billions upon billions of funding, apparently due to this thing called ARL.

That's the "actuarial reserve liability," which is the "deficiency," according to the SEC, in the trust fund of CAP.

The ARL, unfortunately, was invented for life insurance companies, which are never sure of when or where their clients are going to die, or they may all die at the same time, such as during a terrorist attack or a congressional hearing.

The SEC wanted to apply the ARL on CAP, even if CAP can actually predict quite well just when its plan holders will use their education plans.

I mean, really, a one-year old beneficiary of CAP plan cannot all of a sudden just go to college by accident.

Thinking that nobody would ever make out its scheme to run CAP to the ground, the SEC imposed the ARL on CAP, which already put up several billions, and which is now trying to raise more by borrowing the $300 million. All for the SEC!

* * *

A COUPLE of senators, meanwhile, are busy with a disinformation or misinformation or whatever campaign, trying to discredit CAP, saying that it is bankrupt.

No, it is not bankrupt. CAP is only low on cash—I said "cash," as in ready money, and not assets—precisely also because of the SEC.

For one, the SEC stopped CAP from doing business. For another, the SEC did not want CAP to tap its trust fund to pay for the tuition of its scholars, which is actually what the trust fund is all about. I mean, you dip into it when the need arises.

Sen. Mar Roxas even said that the ads put out by CAP to defend itself against the attacks from Roxas himself, was just a waste of money.

I wonder if CAP would have put out the ads, and wasted its money, if Roxas did not start his vicious attack against the company. Just wondering, boss!

Anyway, there is no talk in the business sector on whether Roxas has some marching orders from New York. Nobody knows.

But it is widely known in business that a group from New York wanted to take over CAP some time ago.

Even before the SEC imposed the ARL on CAP, a ranking SEC official already called up CAP to say that a white knight would bail out the company, which was of course the New York group.

* * *

NOW who, er, "helped" the SEC formulate the ARL for companies like CAP but this lobby group called Agile, which is funded by the USAID.

Agile consultants even held office at the SEC.

And one cannot help but wonder about the role of the Palace in this whole sad CAP affair.

The late former President Diosdado Macapagal, father of Gloriaetta, was the chair emeritus of CAP. Even the brother of Gloriaetta sat in the CAP board for some time.

All of a sudden, just when this takeover scheme was about to unfold, Gloriaetta's brother resigned from the CAP board.

One wonders if the New York offensive had the blessings of the Palace. Why would the SEC not see the stupidity of the ARL?

Look, the ARL was off by 48 percent, as against the actual payments made by CAP for 2004, for instance. That 48 percent means more than P1 billion.

In other words, according to the SEC-imposed, Agile-formulated ARL, CAP should put up "reserves" for something it did not have to pay. How stupid is that?

I say that this senate inquiry should ask instead why the SEC forced CAP to put up reserves, based on ARL which was already proven to be awfully wrong.

If the senate can get to the bottom of it, I am sure CAP will not need the $300 million loan.

DOF wants professionals audited

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance wants professionals—such as doctors, lawyers, and accountants—subjected to "predictive auditing" so that government can collect more taxes from them.

Predictive auditing refers to the Bureau of Internal Revenue's use of industry income benchmarks—such as those for doctors—to estimate an individual's tax liabilities.

The BIR is empowered by the National Internal Revenue Code to conduct predictive auditing on hard-to-tax sectors, or those whose accuracy of tax payments is difficult to determine.

Professionals are considered hard-to-tax because their taxes are not withheld by a company, unlike taxes of salaried workers or those with fixed income.

The suggestion to do predictive auditing on them came after a BIR study showed a high level of tax delinquency among doctors from leading hospitals in Metro Manila.

The study revealed that many doctors do not regularly issue receipts, and that some of them do not pay taxes at all.

For this reason, the BIR said it was set to conduct a lifestyle check on doctors to determine the value of their assets and net worth, and predict the level of their tax liabilities.

But the DOF recommended that the BIR also tighten its watch over other professionals, like lawyers, accountants and other high-earning self-employed individuals.

The BIR has committed to collect P546.4 billion in taxes this year, 16 percent more than its 2004 collections, to help meet the national government's target of reducing the budget deficit to below P180 billion.

Stock sale to hasten SMC expansion moves

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to sell the government's stake in San Miguel Corp. gives Southeast Asia's largest brewer a freer rein to pursue its global ambitions, analysts say.

Ms Arroyo's announcement recently came on the back of a Supreme Court ruling to award in favor of the government a disputed 27-percent block of company shares which the state had sequestered in 1987.

The verdict laid to rest a 17-year-old court battle over one of the Philippines's largest companies.

Together with state pension funds, the government has a holding of 38.9 percent—27 percent outright, while the Government Service Insurance System owns 6.6 percent, and the Social Security System 5.3 percent.

An additional 20 percent block, controlled by San Miguel's chairman Eduardo Cojuangco, is still being contested in the courts by the government.

While the government is now free to sell its directly held 27 percent stake, it is uncertain what the two pension funds will do with their combined 11.9 percent.

While proceeds from any sale of the 27 percent share block would go to state coffers, it would also trigger a revamp of San Miguel's 15-member board, where government representatives predominate, and remove the government's effective veto power on corporate strategy.

Ms Arroyo's decision comes amid an aggressive expansion program by the company, led by its hard-charging chairman and political kingpin, once dubbed the "Pac-Man" for his acquisitive bent.

The company has refused to comment on Ms Arroyo's announcement.

Analysts expect more legal challenges to the sale of the share block, which is estimated to be worth P90 billion ($1.6 billion). But they said it should go ahead eventually once it passes muster with Ms Arroyo's allies, as well as her opponents, in the legislature.

"The sale should push through, but there is still a process," said Emil Antonio, dean of the school of economics of the University of Asia and the Pacific.

A legacy of the deposed Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, the government has alleged that the disputed 27-percent stake was acquired through the illegal use of levies imposed on coconut products in the 1970s.

From an investor's standpoint, "it would be positive," he said, citing previous governments' practice of appointing political cronies to the board of San Miguel.

While San Miguel's core business is brewing, it is also into agribusiness, food manufacturing, packaging and non-alcoholic beverages.

The government's moves come amid San Miguel's 1.78 billion Australian-dollar ($1.37 billion) takeover battle for Australian dairy group National Foods Ltd.

Loans would finance the San Miguel bid for National Foods, Australia's biggest dairy company.

San Miguel has also announced a number of acquisitions and projects in the Asia-Pacific region in the past several months, the latest of which was the acquisition of a 76.38-percent stake in Singapore-based ice cream outfit King Creameries Pte. Ltd.

The Supreme Court ruling last year, aside from enabling the planned sale of the 27 percent San Miguel share block, also meant that the company, whose cash flow has been weakened by the overseas expansion, could finally make use of its shares to raise funds.

The court freeze order on the 27-percent share block had previously prevented San Miguel from dissipating the value of the shares, preventing the use of the shares for separate capital-raising activities.

Now that the freeze order has been lifted, San Miguel has said in a statement that it would undertake a rights offer of one for every 10 shares held by shareholders, or 10 percent of the outstanding capital stock of the company. AFP

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 9, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank, Inc.	4	4	3.9	3.9	24,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	30	30	29.5	29.5	287,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56.5	56.5	56.5	56.5	35,600
China Banking Corp.	580	580	580	580	100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47	48	47	48	76,500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.44	1,870,000
International Exch. Bank	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	92,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33.5	34.5	33.5	34.5	2,537,100
Philippine National Bank	27	27.5	27	27.5	26,800
Phil. Savings Bank	30	30	30	30	400
Security Bank Corp.	31.5	32	31.5	32	31,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	29	30	29	30	149,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2415	2415	2415	2415	440
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2	2.02	2	2.02	600,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1755	1765	1755	1765	1,630
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16.5	16.75	16.5	16.5	27,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.64	1.66	1.62	1.66	8,706,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	935	935	935	935	900
Ipeople Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	10,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.049	0.045	0.049	20,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	5,000,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.55	3.75	3.55	3.7	5,861,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1395	1410	1395	1410	65,940
Ivantage Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	200,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	11,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17	17.25	17	17	33,200
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	27	26	26	535,500
Petron Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.8	3.85	1,064,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	175,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.84	1.84	251,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	69,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.14	117,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	100,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.1	100,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.35	2,125,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.8	2	1.8	1.88	600,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	50,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	32.5	33	32.5	33	72,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	39,100
Swift Food Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	110,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	37,100
San Miguel Corp. B	78.5	78.5	78	78	13,500
Universal Robina Corp.	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	20,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.006	0.007	0.006	0.007	39,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	4,000,000
Ayala Corp.	8.1	8.2	8	8.1	12,605,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.71	0.76	0.71	0.71	3,230,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	230,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	312,000
APC Group Inc.	0.43	0.46	0.42	0.44	16,540,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	71,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.76	2.55	1.76	2.55	13,000
Atn Holdings Inc. B	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	10,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	550,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	0.98	0.98	20,890,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	950,000
Crown Equities, Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	1,870,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.83	0.88	0.73	0.73	74,330,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.8	4.85	4.5	4.5	9,351,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.042	0.0525	0.041	0.0525	81,900,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.3	1.4	1.26	1.36	1,973,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9.2	9.2	9.1	9.2	795,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	1	1	0.98	0.98	40,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	44	44.5	44	44.5	792,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0775	0.0825	0.0775	0.0825	9,900,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	7,000
Ionics Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.76	630,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.1	3.05	3.1	387,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.62	1.64	7,907,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	20,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.48	0.49	27,310,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	110,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.26	1,080,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.14	0.17	0.14	0.165	2,050,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.48	0.5	0.48	0.5	900,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.175	0.15	0.165	9,930,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	800,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	30,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	297,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0825	0.085	0.08	0.08	1,700,000
Pryce Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.77	0.78	0.72	0.73	12,090,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.04	1.08	1,730,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.62	0.63	1,140,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.41	0.35	0.39	26,920,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	16.25	16.5	16.25	16.5	75,400
Macroasia Corp. Warrants	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	300,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	6,100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.7	9.7	9.6	9.6	8,718,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	50,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.81	0.82	0.81	0.82	150,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.39	0.4	0.36	0.36	22,440,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.185	0.19	0.18	0.18	4,440,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.175	0.175	780,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.56	0.57	0.51	0.51	107,360,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.9	1.92	1.82	1.84	16,438,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	5,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.25	0.23	0.235	5,820,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.72	1,180,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	50,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.15	2,950,000
Primex Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	100,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.31	0.33	0.27	0.28	29,160,000
SM Development Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	124,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.5	8.6	2,337,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.74	0.95	0.73	0.95	890,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.8	0.95	0.8	0.95	450,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	30,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.8	7.5	6.8	7.2	840,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.5	8.5	8.2	8.5	49,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.85	3.9	3.85	3.9	60,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.41	0.38	0.41	20,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.42	0.45	0.41	0.44	46,050,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.023	0.021	0.023	275,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.032	0.029	0.03	707,900,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.14	4,972,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.32	1.46	1.32	1.44	19,151,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	49	49	45	45.5	1,710,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.33	0.35	0.31	0.35	470,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	131,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	66,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	510,000
Pacifica	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	4,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	96,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.0975	0.12	0.0975	0.11	11,300,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	550,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	5,734,070	115,011,175.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	502,530,740	514,112,785.00
PRO	202,102,000	214,401,940.00
Mining	1,109,631,300	240,139,693.40
OIL	213,456,000	3,262,250.00
GRAND TOTALS :	2,033,454,110	1,086,927,843.40

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	604.78	UP 5.40
Comm'l & Ind'l	3,099.85	DOWN 1.77
PRO	854.87	DOWN 7.81
Mining	3,676.25	UP 230.16
OIL	2.75	UP 0.04
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	1,179.60	UP 0.66
Composite	2,028.86	DOWN 1.22

NO. OF ADVANCES: 72, NO. OF DECLINES: 37, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 27, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES 136, NO. OF TRADES: 5,938

DISCLOSURES

PHILIPPINE Realty and Holdings Corp. accepted the resignation of director Gerard Brimo, who now resides in Canada.

* * *

AYALA Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 8 at 9 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel InterContinental Manila, Ayala Center, Makati City.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. disclosed that it paid S$8.15 million for the 76.38-percent equity in King's Creameries Pte Ltd. ***Compiled by DJ Yap, PDI Research***

Commercial bank lending seen to grow by 12%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas expects lending by commercial banks to grow by 12 percent this year.

The expected rate of growth is much higher than the 3.6 percent expansion posted by the industry as of November last year.

In an interview, BSP Assistant Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the projected loan growth for this year was consistent with expectations that investment spending would play a more significant role in boosting economic growth.

He said this was in line with the projected 5-6 percent inflation range and a gross domestic product growth target of 5.3-6.3 percent this year.

"It also assumes that growth will be driven by more credit-intensive sectors," Guinigundo said.

GUINIGUNDO

Based on the BSP's latest data, commercial banks' outstanding loans as of November grew to P1.54 trillion from year-ago level.

Domestic liquidity or m3 is projected to grow by 10 percent this year from the 8.2 percent annual growth as of end-December.

Domestic liquidity or m3 is used to estimate the entire supply of money in an economy. It includes money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements.

The BSP said the continued improvement in the level of liquidity suggested positive prospects for real sector activity in the months ahead.

The BSP vowed to maintain a "supportive" environment for the real economy and keep a close eye on monetary and price conditions in the near term.

Guinigundo said if growth would be driven more by investments than consumption, this would fuel a greater demand for loans especially from credit-intensive sectors like manufacturing and services.

The manufacturing sector continues to account for the largest contribution to the total loan expansion. This sector accounts for about 70 percent of the country's industrial output and about a quarter of the domestic economy.

Aside from manufacturing, bank lending in the country is driven by demand from agriculture, fisheries and forestry; wholesale and retail trade; electricity, gas and water; and, community, social and personal services.

However, demand for loans remained sluggish in the financial sector, real estate and business services, construction, transportation, storage and communication, and mining and quarrying.

To encourage loan expansion, the Monetary Board has maintained the BSP's overnight borrowing or reverse repurchase rate at 6.75 percent and the overnight lending or repurchase rate at 9 percent, the same levels kept since July last year.

EPCIBank bags ₱3.8-B trade financing facility

By Doris C. Dumlao

EQUITABLE PCI Bank, the country's third biggest bank, has entered into a 50-million-euro (P3.8 billion) trade financing deal with German bank Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale (NordLB).

The agreement with NordLB will give EPCIBank access to long-term financing with insurance cover from export credit agencies for equipment from developed economies in North America and the European Union.

The facility will cater to local companies in need of long-term finance for the importation of capital goods from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)-member countries.

EPCIBank president and CEO Rene J. Buenaventura said: "We expect this facility to be of great assistance to the business sector. It is part of our program to assist enterprises and promote the growth and development of industries. They are the reason why we continue to build up our capabilities in trade financing."

Heinz-Werner Frings, general manager of NordLB Singapore, said: "EPCIBank is the best Filipino bank to work with when it comes to structured trade transactions because of its outstanding reputation in the international market, its dedicated team unmatched by local competition, and the quality of its lending portfolio."

Aristotle Villaraza, EPCIBank executive vice president, said the bank continued to seek ways to provide enterprises access to foreign credit resources, which could be more cost-effective than domestic loans.

"This makes it possible for importers to develop their production capabilities with foreign technology and to increase the volume and profitability of their business," Villaraza said.

EPCIBank, with assets of P306 billion, claims to be the only domestic bank with a dedicated team in structured finance that is able to directly access long-term project funding from major export credit agencies worldwide.

PSALM turns over Talomo plant to Hedcor

THE POWER Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) recently turned over the 3.5-megawatt Talomo facility in Davao to Hydro Electric Development Corp. (Hedcor).

The Talomo complex is the first power generation facility to be privatized by the PSALM, in line with its mandate under Republic Act No. 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira).

In a bidding in March last year, Hedcor, a wholly owned subsidiary of Aboitiz Equity Ventures (AEV), won the bid for the four-plant facility with an offer of $1.37 million for the plant.

PSALM also turned over to United States-based lawyer Ramon Constancio the 1.8-MW Barit plant in Camarines Sur.

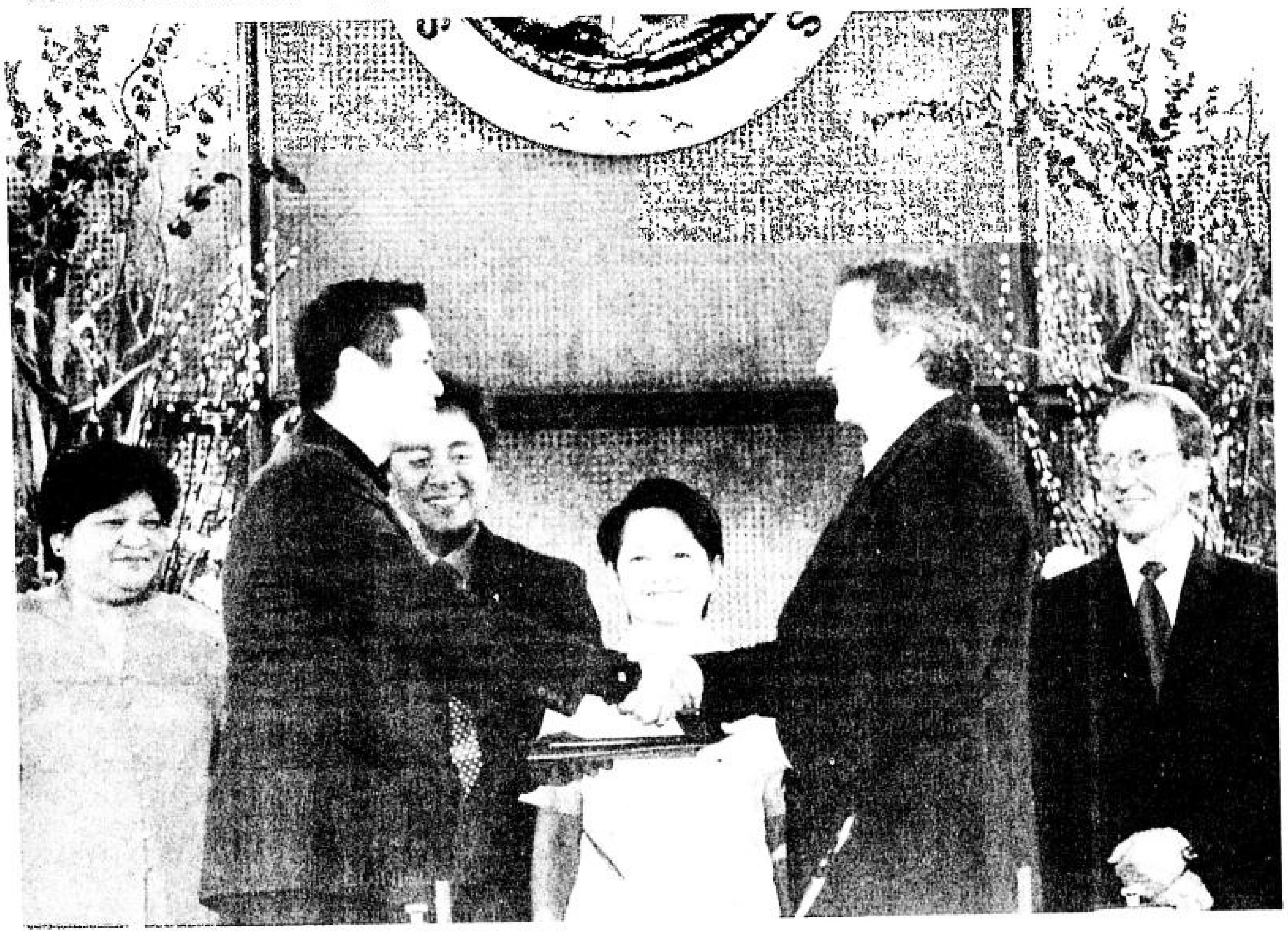
Constancio won the bidding for the Barit generation plant last June 25 with an offer of $480,000.

During the turnover ceremonies, both winning bidders committed to boost the capacity of the two plants, by either adding capacity or by making the plants run more efficiently.

Hedcor chair and chief executive Erramon Aboitiz said in an interview after the ceremonies that the Talomo plant would be able to generate more electricity after the installation of more efficient turbines.

Percival Favoreal, Constancio's representative, expressed the same intent for the Barit plant.

"As a private entity, our target is to increase the generating capacity of the plant," Aboitiz said. "More generated power means more revenue for the local government of Buhi since, as a private corporation, we are now subject to taxes." *Abigail L. Ho*



COAL-TO-LIQUID FUEL CONVERSION
President Macapagal-Arroyo looks on as Energy Undersecretary Peter Anthony Abaya and Headwaters Technology Innovation Group CEO and president Craig Hickman seal with a handshake a memorandum of understanding governing a coal-to-liquid fuel project. The signing of the deal, held in Malacañang, was also witnessed by (standing from left) Philippine representative to the ADB Marita M. Jimenez; Energy Secretary Vince Perez, and Kirk Benson, COO of HTIG.
EDWIN BACASMAS

CAP selling trust fund assets worth P700M

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED giant College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) is selling some of its trust fund assets to raise P500-P700 million in funds that will be used to pay tuition fees of plan holders by March.

CAP first vice president Bobby Cafe said after a forum yesterday that CAP was required to settle some P700-P800 million worth of tuition fees. The total requirement for the second semester or for October to March was estimated to reach P1.2 billion. Of the amount, CAP has already paid some P454 million.

Cafe said the company was in talks with possible investors for the sale of shares in Fil-Estate Management Inc. and System Technology Inc. certificates worth P1 billion. He did not identify the other assets to be sold but hinted that these might include pieces of property.

Based on CAP's financial statement in 2003, its trust fund, now worth P8.8 billion, has real estate investments worth P2.7 billion, shares of stock worth P2.26 billion and MRT bonds worth roughly P3 billion.

Cafe said the company was continuing its negotiations with the Roxas Group despite a pronouncement by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that it was slapping a case against Roxas-led companies on charges of illegal logging.

Cafe said Roxas was offering pieces of property worth P6 billion to be transferred to CAP in exchange for shares in the preneed company.

Roxas, through Green Square Properties and Green Circle Properties and Resources, is proposing to subscribe to CAP shares worth P6 billion and pay for them by allotting parcels of land in Baler town in the eastern province of Aurora near Dingalan Bay. Cafe also said CAP was in talks with the Roxas Group and the Fil-Estate Group for the acquisition of a 52-percent stake in the company.

CAP is also in talks with a US special fund, First American Investments Llc., for a $300-million loan. The first tranche or roughly $80 million may be drawn in the next 40 days. CAP is negotiating to convert the loan into shares of the company in case of default.

CAP said FAI will have the option to convert the loan into shares of the company. Asked whether these moves—which may mean ceding control to new investors—were acceptable to shareholders, Cafe quoted CAP president Enrique Sobrepeña as saying that "what is important at this point is for CAP's name to stay in the country."

CAP is the pioneer in providing education plans in the country. Cafe admitted that CAP had a "cash flow problem" but added that this was already being addressed by the company.

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5.0MM - 9,999,999	6.250	6.500	6.625	6.750
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Vehicle sales down 1.3% in January

By Abigail L. Ho

VEHICLE sales in January hit 6,634 units, down by 1.3 percent from the 6,724 units sold in the same month last year, documents from the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) showed.

Last month's total sales also represented an 18-percent drop from the December sales figure of 8,147 units.

Commercial vehicles, which include Asian utility vehicles, light commercial vehicles, light trucks and buses, contributed 3,847 units to total vehicle sales in January.

Compared with the January 2004 figure, the number of commercial vehicles sold this year dropped by 7 percent from 4,135 units.

Commercial vehicle sales last month plunged 24.5 percent from the December sales figure of 5,094 units.

Campi attributed the slowdown in commercial vehicle sales last month to the slight decline in AUV sales, the delay in delivery of completely built-up units, some pending refleeting accounts, and the unavailability of stock for selected vehicle models.

Year-on-year AUV sales showed a 17-percent decline, with 1,505 units sold last month as compared with 1,813 units sold in January 2004.

From December last year to January this year, AUV sales dropped 25 percent because of the effect of the new excise tax law as well as the falling demand for gasoline-run models.

Passenger car sales, on the other hand, jumped 7.6 percent to 2,787 units compared with last year's 2,589 units sold.

Campi said strong sales during this period was brought by the introduction of new models into the market during the last half of 2004. These new models were the Toyota Vios 1.3J model and the BMW 1 series.

Compared with December sales of 3,053 units, however, January sales represented an 8.7-percent decline. Coming off a high-promo yearend sales push, January is traditionally a slow month for the automotive industry.

Mirant revives plan to go public

From page B1

Corp., wherein the government retained a 40-percent stake in the oil firm, while selling 40 percent to Saudi Aramco and 20 percent to the public through an IPO.

The government, through PNOC-EDC parent firm PNOC, holds 10 billion shares in PNOC-EDC. The PNOC board has granted PNOC-EDC the authority to boost these existing shares to 15 billion through the issuance of 5 billion new shares.

PNOC will also be selling 4 billion of its existing PNOC-EDC shares.

Combining the 5 billion new shares with the 4 million old shares to be sold, there would then be 9 billion shares that would be made available to private entities and to the public.

Of the 9 billion, 6 billion, or 40 percent of the total 15 billion PNOC-EDC shares, would be sold through a private placement.

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Bill management made easy with GlobeSolutions' BillAnalyzer

GLOBESOLUTIONS takes pride in anticipating their clients' needs and providing a wide array of services to suit their demands. BillAnalyzer is a new service that targets corporate efficiency through mobile accounts management.

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BillAnalyzer provides more than just individual billing statements. Clients enrolled in other GlobeSolutions services - such as BlackBerry, AutoloadMAX Corporate Edition TxtConnect, TxtHotline and MobileMail - can also monitor and verify their monthly usage of each subscribed service through the website.

Productivity and corporate costs can be easily evaluated using BillAnalyzer. Designated company representatives are authorized to group several accounts under a specific department and assign service numbers to each. This will greatly benefit human resources and administration staff since the service facilitates the online monitoring of a corporation's actual phone usage. BillAnalyzer also provides the option of sorting and filtering usage data according to the corporate client's specific business specifications, such as summary of charges per department or most frequently called numbers. Field personnel will find the service particularly useful since it eliminates the tedious process of manually sorting, highlighting and verifying business calls listed on their monthly billing statement. Furthermore, trend analysis is made convenient by the BillAnalyzer query tool, which allows authorized online users to use the sorted data to generate pre-defined reports, graphs and charts - making it an indispensable tool for managers who need clear and concise visual representations to substantiate vital business plans. In summary, BillAnalyzer provides companies with a secure method of monitoring and managing their accounts.

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FCBG
BAKERY FAIR 2005

PLASTMANN JOINS BAKERY FAIR 2005

Plastmann Industrial Corp one of the country's leading plastic injection molding company, manufacturer of plastic crates, packaging for personal care, dental care products, electronics and appliances parts, recently signed in with the Filipino Chinese Bakery Association Inc for the forthcoming 3rd International Bakery Fair slated on Feb. 18 to 20, at the World Trade Center. Shown are (from left): Marcos Ong Jr., FCBAI corporate secretary; William S. Ong, VP for-marketing, Plastmann Industrial Corp; FCBAI director and Bakery Fair 2005 committee chair Henry Ah, and FCBAI vice president Leonardo Ong.

Globe International Services keeps families connected this Chinese New Year

UNITY and togetherness are very important in the celebration of Chinese New Year. Beyond the dragon dances, ang pao envelopes, and firecrackers, the occasion is all about welcoming prosperity and harmony into our homes and spending time with loved ones. The New Year's Eve family dinner is always the highlight of the festivities. It is so significant that in the past, the family would reserve places at the table for absent members, to symbolize that they are still part of this special occasion.

With Globe International Services, families can constantly stay connected, ensuring that loved ones miles away can join the New Year celebration. Globe IDD allows you to call any country, anytime, for only 40 US cents per minute. Globe further enhances this experience by providing other means to communicate with family and friends abroad. You can share memorable moments by sending messages through Globe International Text at P10 per message for G-Plan subscribers and P15 per message for Globe Prepaid and send photo (P20) and video (P40) messages to more countries with International MMS. With these affordable rates, Globe is truly the leader in international mobile communication services.

Welcome the Year of the Rooster by greeting loved ones abroad. Globe International Services makes great things possible by keeping Filipinos in touch when it matters most. Call now and wish your whole clan a hearty "Kung hei fat choi!"

KIDS STOP DAYCARE CENTER CHRISTMAS PARTY

'The Best Present' was the Christmas party theme of Kids Stop Daycare Center held last Dec. 15. Shown in photo are the Kids Stop children together with the Payatas Daycare Center as guests of honor at the party. Also shown are the UP Red Cross Youth Members: Rianne Collantes, president and Pie de Guzman, administrator. Kids Stop is located at the 3/F Goodwill Corporate Center Building, 393 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City with tel. no. 899-9147.

[redacted] [redacted]

GMC AWARDED BY CUP

Gomeco Metal Corp (GMC) was recently awarded by the Consumers Union of the Philippines (CUP) as the Philippines' Most Outstanding Kitchen Equipment Manufacturer. Shown is CUP president Quirino Marquines (5th from left) giving the award to George L. Kaw , president of GMC (3rd from left). Also shown are (from left, in dark suits) Nathanael T. Kaw, GMC service manager; Jonathan T. Kaw, GMC general manager. Others in photo are Imelda Papin, Rev. Sonia Lim, and other unidentified officers of CUP.

KELLOGG'S COLORING COMPETITION TOP WINNER

Albert Kevin Cruz from Aquinas School emerged as the top winner in the inter-school 'Tony the Tiger Coloring Competition' organized by Kellogg's. Bokhani Datumanong of Pasig Christian University grabbed 2nd place, and Mariela Alyna Salvador from Elizabeth Seton School landed 3rd place. The winners and their respective schools received a total of P50,000 during the awarding ceremony held at the Kellogg's marketing office in Libis last Jan. 12. Photo shows the top winner Albert Kevin Cruz from Aquinas School with his parents, teacher and Teddy Villaflor, market manager, Kellogg's.

SUPERB WATCH FOR A SUPER COP

Hollywood star Keanu Reeves wears an Oris watch, the Modern Classic, in the thriller Constantine. Reeves thus joins the constellation of stars who have appeared in well-known films wearing Oris watches, such as Meg Ryan, Gwyneth Paltrow, Nicolas Cage, and Harrison Ford, to name but a few. Oris, the Swiss watch manufacturer from Hölstein, markets its first-class High-Mech watches across the globe. In the fantasy thriller Constantine, the Francis Lawrence film due in cinemas in February 2005, Keanu Reeves plays John Constantine. He's no ordinary cop, but a supernatural detective who has literally gone to hell and back in his paranormal investigations. Oris and Keanu Reeves in a race against time.

ProductFILES

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FOR A sole refreshing summer for your feet, grab a Titania Foot Spa Trio. The Titania Vital Foot Bath has Dead Sea salt that makes skin soft and smooth. It also revitalizes and deodorizes while taking away the pains of tired and painful feet. The Titania Deodorant Foot Soap then cleans the feet more thoroughly and rids the feet of fungus-causing germs. And for that final touch apply the Titania Smooth Heel Cream to prevent and heal cracked heels. Now your feet are ready to walk in style even without sandals in the beach! Titania is exclusively distributed by Filstar Distributors Corp, 2/F Reliance Center Building, E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Ugong, Pasig City with tel. nos. 671-0555 and 671-3171.

BITS Clips

Free NRT program

THE CHURCH of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints joins forces with the Department of Health (DOH) to implement for the first time in the Philippines, the free Neonatal Resuscitation Training (NRT) program, a worldwide humanitarian initiative that aims to provide extensive training to over 100 Filipino medical practitioners in Manila and Cebu. In this project, medical professionals - doctors, nurses and midwives will be provided free training and lecture on resuscitating newborn infants who lack oxygen in the brain, thus preventing death. The first training sessions is slated on Feb. 10 to 11 in Manila at the National Children's Hospital and on Feb. 14 to 15 in the Latter-day Saints meeting house in Sikatuna, Cebu.

NTC-HRM 11th Anniversary

THE HOTEL and Restaurant Management Department of the National Teachers College (NTC) is celebrating its 11th anniversary with a 2-day event happening on Feb. 10 and 11. Alumni members and those interested in joining the celebration may contact Perlita Mallari at 704-1385 and 0920-6546680, the Dean's Office at 734-5601 loc. 109 or Emilio Angala at 0920-3419292.

3rd ALS Seminar

TOP FILIPINO motivational speaker Francis Kong stages his 3rd Achievers and Leaders Seminar at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel today with a battery of other outstanding speakers and most urgent topics that will surely help CEOs, managers, entrepreneurs and professionals alike especially at this time of fledgling hopes and expectations for 2005. The seminar is organized by Salt and Light Ventures.

PCC Alumni Homecoming

PASIG Catholic College will be celebrating its 92nd Foundation Week on Feb. 12 to 19. High School Batch '80 will host the Annual Alumni Homecoming on Feb. 19, at the PCC Quadrangle. Registration starts at 5 p.m. For details contact Rosario Caguingin at 641-7544 or 09197286309.

Adamson Homecoming

ADAMSON University will hold its 71st Grand Alumni Homecoming with the Silver Jubilee Batch 1980 as host on Feb. 12, to be held at St. Vincent and St. Therese grounds. A University tour will be held from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Other festive activities include the bingo fiesta at 3 p.m. wherein they will give away P70,000 worth of cash prizes. A flea market will be opened from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. A special band performance featuring the Degree band will render songs from the 80's, 90's and current tunes on the night of Feb. 12. Tickets are priced at P200. For inquiries call 524-2011 local 302, 524-6544, 0919-6928748 and 0922-8114949, look for Grace or Allan.

UNITED ARCHITECTS OF THE PHILIPP

UAP INDUCTS NEW EASTERN VISAYAS CHAPTERS

The United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) recently chartered the West Tacloban and East Samar chapters under its District C-3 in the province of Leyte. The chartering rites, which was held at the Ritz Tower de Leyte, Tacloban City, was graced by Vice Governor Maria Mimieta Bagulaya representing Governor Jericho 'Icot' Petilla. Shown in photo are UAP national president Enrique Olonan (far left) handing a UAP history book as a token of appreciation to Vice Governor Bagulaya (3rd from left). Also in photo (from left): area vice president for Visayas Ramon Teruel Jr., secretary general Jean Cornejo, national executive vice president Edric Marco Florentino and chair for chapter organization Peregrino Baclit Jr. UAP calls on all licensed architects to register and update their membership to the UAP as the Integrated Accredited Professional Organization of Architects (IAPOA) through the UAP secretariat at tel. nos. (02)412-6364, 412-6374 and 412-6403.

SWISS ARMY
47
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MIGUEL LAZARO RACES TO VICTORY WITH URC

Racing newbie Miguel Lazaro recently bagged the Overall Champion and Driver of the Year titles for both the Sports Values Inc Challenge Cup (SVICC) and the National Junior Touring Car Championship (NJTCC), with the URC Beverage Group as one of his sponsors for both races. Photo shows the winning team at the Subic Racing Circuit - Miguel Lazaro, and his teammates (left, back) Dax Santiago, Bambee Espiritu and Basil Bautista, with the URC Beverage Group (from left) Irish Tan Chua, Ma. Veronica Valdez, Blanca Rodriguez, Carlo De La Paz, Rhett Tan, Joseph Charles Cruel, and Paulleen Kathy Soliman.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late LUMEN MILAD settled by their heirs through an extrajudicial portion acknowledged before Notary Public Delfin Agcaoili of Quezon City as per Doc No. 2437; Page No. 18; Book No. CXV; Series of 2004.
(PDI Feb. 10, 17 & 24, 2005)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late AURORA GUIANG CONCEPCION settled by their heirs through an extrajudicial portion acknowledged before Notary Public Corleto Castro of Pampanga as per Doc No. 2437; Page No. 18; Book No. CXV; Series of 2004.
(PDI Feb. 10, 17 & 24, 2005)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late JESUS S.F. GONZAGA, Sr. was extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 10; Page No. 99; Book No. 2; Series of 2005 of Notary Public Dante S. David of Quezon City
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court invites contractors to register, apply for eligibility and bid for the supply of labor, tools, equipment, materials and supervision for the renovation and rehabilitation of the Palace of Justice, Cebu City.

Project Description	Approved Budget	Expected Date of Commencement of Work	Project Duration	Source of Fund
Renovation and Restoration of the 4-storey Palace of Justice Building Cebu City	P9.7M	15 May 2005	180 calendar days	Judiciary Development Fund

Criteria for the eligibility check of the prospective bidders, examination and evaluation of bids and post-qualification and all matters relevant to this procurement shall be in accordance with Republic Act No. 9184 (The Government Procurement Reform Act) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

I. SUBMISSION OF LETTER OF INTENT AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT

All prospective bidders must submit either personally or through an authorized representative their letter of intent and eligibility requirements on 17 February 2005, between 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, at either of the following venues:

(1) Old Session Hall, Supreme Court
Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila

(2) Library, 4th Floor
Palace of Justice, Cebu City

II. NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBLE BIDDERS AND DISTRIBUTION OF BID DOCUMENTS

Prospective bidders shall be informed of the results of the eligibility check by 25 February 2005. Bid documents will be made available to the eligible contractors from 28 February to 07 March 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00

III. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

A pre-bid conference shall be held on 17 March 2005 at the Palace of Justice, Cebu City at 2:00 p.m.

IV. SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF BIDS

All bids must be submitted at the Palace of Justice, Cebu City on 7 April 2005 by 11:00 a.m.; the bids shall be opened at 2:00 p.m. on the same day.

Award shall be made to the bidder who submitted the lowest calculated bid and who is post-qualified.

For additional information, contact Atty. Peter John Javier or Engr. Arnold Paradero at (02) 552-9589 to 94.

The Supreme Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids or offers which it may consider to be disadvantageous and not beneficial to the Court or to waive any defect or informality therein.

03 February 2005.

(Sgd.) **CHRISTOPHER O. LOCK**
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ARTDO International marked its beginning in 1974 when the organization held its first annual conference. A core group of visionary leaders from 12 Asian Countries met in Manila on November 9, 1974 for the First Asian Regional Training and Development Organization (ARTDO) Conference. A shared vision brought them together: To promote human resource development as a pre-requisite to economic growth and progress through a unified approach.

Today, ARTDO is an international umbrella body of organizations from 30 countries. It has widened the industry's focus to broaden perspectives in training and development practices and performance to measurable results. This year, the Philippine Society for Training and Development will host the ARTDO International Convention with its theme "Unified Global HRD Breaking Boundaries". Let ARTDO be your guide to exceptional learning and performance. Join us for the ARTDO 2005 International Conference & Exposition, September 7-9, 2005 at the Manila Hotel. Foreign and local experts will be on-hand to share their latest ideas, theories, and solutions—all with a common goal of attaining excellence promoting workplace learning and performance in organizations. The convention will explore emerging trends in the training and development profession in the light of the influences of globalization and how training and development professionals across the world can establish networks. Join now...register at telephone numbers (632) 812-9931, (632) 813 9072 or email at secretariat@pstd.org

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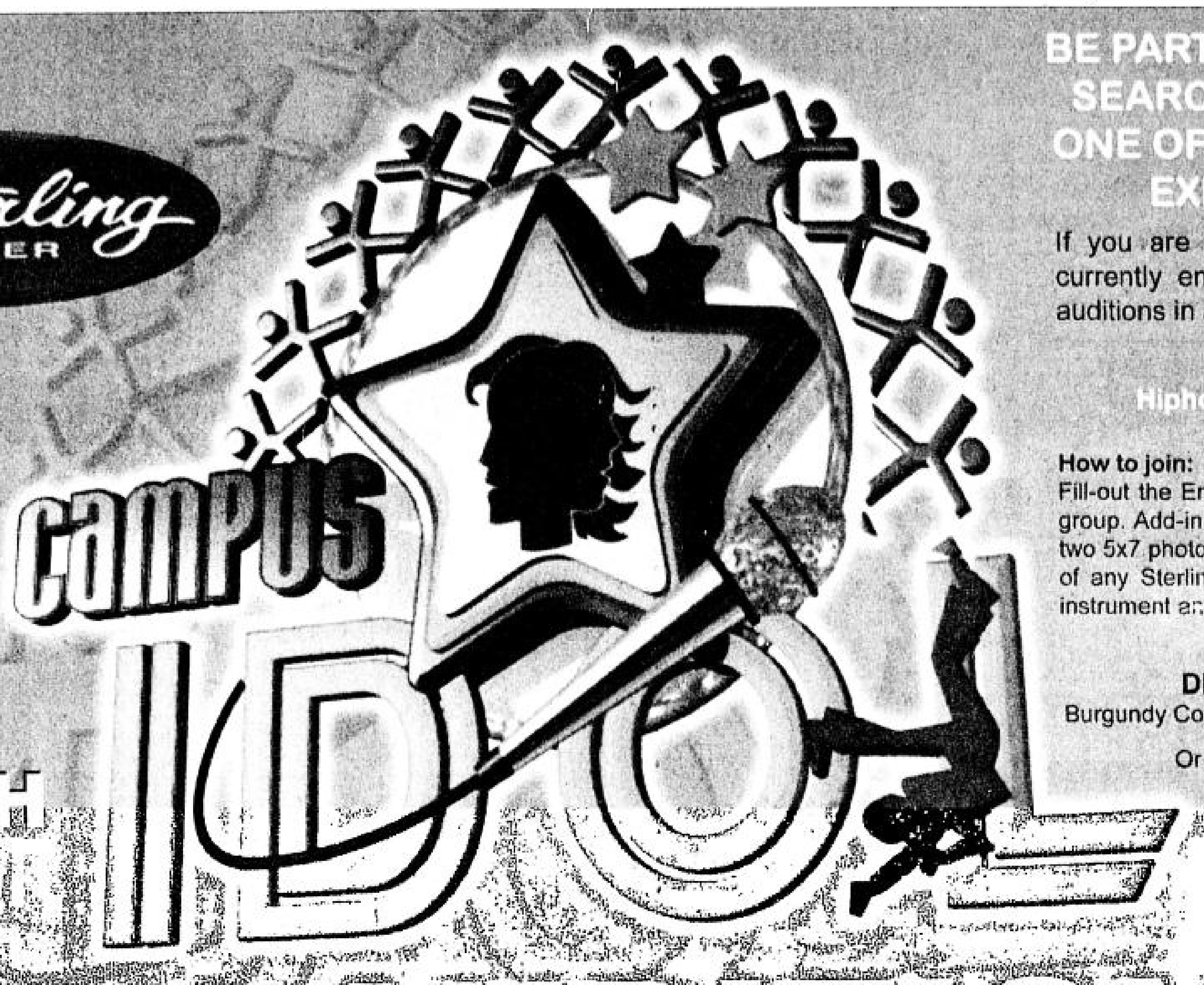

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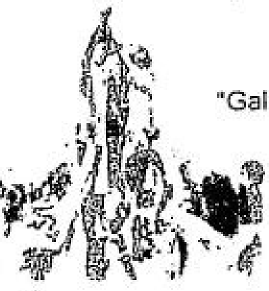
GALING PILIPINO MOVEMENT (GPM) is a non-profit, private sector initiative of citizens committed to recognize, affirm and propagate what is good and excellent about being PILIPINO to develop a culture of excellence and a commendable sense of national pride as a value-centered foundation for nation-building. *Itaguyod natin ang*

February 2005 Calendar of Events

Galing Housekeeping Seminar
8am to 5pm, Monday February 7, 2005
I-PEX Training Center
Hotel Victoria de Malate, Manila

GPM's eco-agro tourism program BISITA PILIPINAS, will enlist private homes, preferably ancestral houses, whose owners and caretakers are willing to participate in the development of a local bed & breakfast homestay program. Learn the techniques of quality housekeeping find out how to make beds ala hotel style.. know the proper use of cleaning aids. AND MORE! A well-kept house speaks of a well-run home.

Seminar Fee: P100.00 for GPM Members, P200.00 for non-members



GP Youth Kapihan
February 12, 2005
Saturday, 8:00 to 11am
Chowking Pioneer, Pioneer

"Galing Communications". GPM invites students and young professionals to an insider's look at the exciting communications and advertising industries. Renowned photographer Mandy Navasero, Margot Pardo of award-winning printing firm Primex and other media personalities will share how Pinoy talents thrive in these industries.

Free Registration! Brunch courtesy of Chowking

Natural Farming Seminar
8am to 5pm, Friday, February 18, 2005
Chowking Pioneer, Mandaluyong City

BABUYAN NA HINDI AMOY BABOY! Innovative Galing Pilipino seminar conducted by Mr. Andry Lim. Attend this seminar & find out how to raise pigs *WALANG HUGAS, WALANG LIGO, WALANG BAHO!* Learn how to grow *CHEMICAL-FREE FRUITS & VEGETABLES*. And know how to make concoctions using natural ingredients found in your backyard.

Seminar Fee: P500.00 for GPM members, P1,000.00 for non-members

GP Kapihan
8am to 11 am, Saturday, February 26, 2005
Chowking Pioneer, Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City

GP Kapihan is a monthly breakfast forum that features good news and innovative and uncommon solutions to common problems as a counterpoint to pervading negativism and bad news syndrome.

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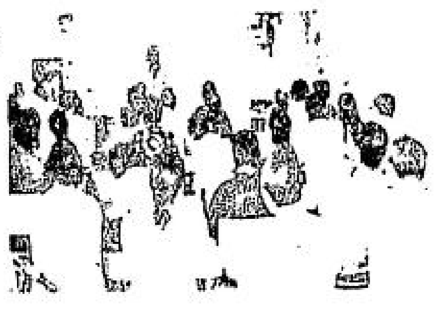
Free Registration! Brunch courtesy of Chowking



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For particulars
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or log on to

Marketing Institute of the Philippines
The Education and Training Arm of the
PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

MARKETING CONVERGENCE

Presents a seminar on

BASICS OF MARKETING A TO Z

March 2, 3 & 4, 2005
1:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati

This seminar helps clear the confusion and jumble in marketing. Thus, it aims to give marketing executives the essential concepts and tools needed to design exceptional marketing programs and effectively function as marketing practitioners.

Target Participants

This seminar is specifically designed for those who may already be doing a marketing management function but whose academic preparation is not marketing. They can be front-line, mid- and upper-level managers in brand management, sales, customer relations, advertising, promotions, media and public relations.

Seminar Objectives

At the end of this seminar on Basics of Marketing A to Z, participants will know the key marketing concepts like the macro and micro of marketing, 4P's (product, place, price and promotion), consumer behavior and target marketing.

Methodology

Lectures, exercises, and in-class application projects relate specifically to the workplace, hence, participants can immediately apply new concepts and skills. Resource speakers are multi-awarded marketing practitioners who will share their experiences and insights about the Basics of Marketing.

SEMINAR PROGRAM
Day 1 – March 2, 2005 (Wednesday)
Introductory Session · 1:00 – 1:30 pm
Basic Business and Marketing concepts
Session Chair: Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac
Professor, San Beda College
Session 1 - 1:30 - 3:30 pm
The Enigma of Marketing Mix in Today's Business Environment
Speaker: Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac
Professor, San Beda Collage
Session 2 - 3:45-5:30 pm
How Consumer Analysis Affects Business Strategy
Speaker: Mr. Ricardo de Vera
President, Pin Point Direct Marketing
BRIEFING ON THE FINAL PROJECT - 5:45 6:00 pm

Day 2 – March 3, 2005 (Thursday)
Link Up Session 1:00 – 1:30 pm
Session 3 - 1:30 - 3:30 pm
Crucial Areas in Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning
Speaker: Ms. Ma. Teresa V. Gargantiel*
Senior Executive Officer, Jimenez Basic
Session 4 - 3:45 – 5:30 pm
Mapping the Winning Strategies for Tougher Times
Speaker: Ms. Vivian Faustino
Assistant Vice President
International Exchange Bank
BRAINSTORMING - 5:30 - 6:00 PM

Day 3 – March 4, 2005 (Friday)
Link Up Session – 1:00 - 1:30 pm
Session 5 - 1:30 – 3:30 pm
Connecting with your Consumers through Effective Communication
Speaker: MR. ANTONIO S. VENTOSA*
Managing Director, Leo-Burnett
PRESENTATION OF CASES/SUMMATION - 3:45 – 5:30 pm

For inquiries, please call up the Philippine Marketing Association Secretariat c/o Ms. Lydia Mariñas Tel. Nos. 634-5722, 634-4890, 636-1451 • E-mail lydiamm@edsamail.com.ph

*speaker to be confirmed

Drink up or speak up. Our continued reliance on imported fossil fuels like coal and oil for energy is one of the largest reasons behind problems like global warming, air pollution, the rise in respiratory ailments, and the worsening condition of our water supplies. This dependence also leaves us economically vulnerable to the spiraling cost of coal and oil in the world market. And things will only get murkier unless we reduce our use of coal and oil and push for the increased use of renewable energy sources like geothermal, wind, biomass, hydro, and solar. Speak up and let the government know you want clean energy. Log on to www.powerswitch.org.ph. Act now and help get the Renewable Energy Bill passed into law. Maybe then, the future won't be such a hard thing to swallow.

INQUIRER WWF

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

CalEnergy donates close to P3 million to typhoon victims

A RECENT relief operation for the typhoon victims was conducted by CalEnergy . Dubbed "Alay sa Pasko", CalEnergy employees volunteered in the two-day food distribution worth P0.7 million to over 500 families. The team of employee volunteers served six remote barangays of Bongabon and Gabaldon, journeying through rough roads and a river. The far-flung barangays included Calaanan and Labi for Bongabon, and Ligaya, Sawmills, Bognan and Bagong Sikat for Gabaldon. Gabaldon lies 33 kilometers from Cabanatuan city, which is 114 kilometers north of Manila. Bongabon, on the other hand, has a distance of 28 kilometers from Cabanatuan city.

The National Irrigation Administration, the local government units and the provincial office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development helped organize the event. CalEnergy, an affiliate of MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company, operates the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Hydroelectric Power Project in Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya. Engineer Alex Coloma of NIA headed the organization's employee-volunteers. While Casecnan plant manager Willie Sarmago and CalEnergy's Corporate Social Responsibility coordinator Avic Arcilla took charge of the company volunteers.

The team of volunteers led by CalEnergy employees likewise went to Gabaldon. Unlike Bongabon, there was no reported casualty in the 28,000 population of Gabaldon. Similar to Bongabon, the typhoons caused damages to the Gabaldon communities' livelihood, which includes crops and livestock pegged at P24.6 million, and infrastructure estimated at P31.6 million. "The end-customers of the Casecnan Multipurpose Power Project which CalEnergy operates are the farmers. During these crucial times, we have immediately responded to the needs of the affected farming communities not only in the immediate areas where we operate but also in the nearby provinces that the storms have caused damage," Joseph L. Sullivan, CalEnergy president said. He added that the drive behind CalEnergy's active participation to provide emergency assistance is its top corporate priority, customer service.

"More than the donations to the affected farming communities, CalEnergy employees have volunteered their time and effort to participate in this worthy cause. The company encourages volunteerism since it puts into action our corporate priority of employee commitment," Linda B. Castillo, CalEnergy vice president for Legal and Corporate Affairs, said. "Alay sa Pasko" forms part of CalEnergy's plan to lend support to the affected communities. The company earlier conducted a distribution of goods worth P0.5 million to the communities surrounding the Casecnan Multipurpose Power Project.

CalEnergy also heeded the call of Department of Energy Secretary Vincent Perez to the energy sector to create an emergency assistance fund for super typhoon Yoyong. The company donated P1.5 million to the fund where 10 other energy companies likewise participated. The energy sector donation was earmarked for food assistance to 10,000 individuals for a period of 10 days coursed through the Corporate Network for Disaster Response. In the next phase of its plan, CalEnergy addresses the need to support structural rehabilitation. The company will provide galvanized iron sheets worth P0.3 million to communities in the Quirino province, one of the most devastated areas hit by the typhoons. The GI sheets will be used to rebuild the homes of the people.

VP NOLI DE CASTRO INAUGURATES ISABELLE GARDEN VILLAS

Vice President Noli "Kabayan" De Castro hands out the key to Daisybelle de Asis, owner of Unit 101, Cluster 1 of Isabelle Garden Villas housing project in Moonwalk, Parañaque which the Vice President inaugurated. Assisting the Vice President (from left) are: Rep. Rollo Golez, Nelson Nepumuceno, president, Techno Asia Construction and Development Inc and project developer, lawyer Romero Quimbo, president, Pag-IBIG Fund, and Rep. Edgardo Zialcita. Funded under the Medium and High Rise Building and Direct Developmental Loan Programs of the Pag-IBIG Fund, Isabelle Garden has delivered about 300 inner city dwellings for the local market and overseas Filipinos. From 2001 to September 2004, the Pag-IBIG Fund has released P40.4 billion which financed the construction or purchase of 152, 048 shelter units contributing 64 percent of total funding provided by key government shelter agencies under the National Shelter Program.

Leisure Farms conducts lot owners seminar

LANDCO Pacific Corp's Leisure Farms, the country's first residential hobby farming and agro-tourism development, conducted a seminar getting lot owners ready for the intensive process of designing and constructing their house and farmlots.

Held at the Olympia Suites in Makati, the seminar was led by resource speakers Dexter Banzali, general manager of Leisure Farms Tagaytay Inc (LFTI), Carlito Borillo, technical director of Leisure Farms and Jun Lago.

The lot owners were oriented on the design and construction process as speakers tackled such subjects as working with an architect - choosing services, negotiating fees and searching for the right person. The audience was also given a blow-by-blow of the different building and construction stages.

They were further oriented with the vision of Leisure Farms - what building a gentleman farming community is all about, and the relevant organizations in the community that are part of the project.

Leisure Farms' Farm Estate Management Services were also instructed while important technical aspects such as paperwork and processes were also discussed in detail. Lot owners were given a run-through of many specific services offered by Leisure Farms - from farm planning and design to development.

The 2-hour comprehensive seminar was capped off with a delicious lunch devoured by the bunch of hungry, freshly enlightened leisure farmers.

Interested parties or lot owners in need of further assistance are invited to contact Nicky Panlilio Santos, customer service officer at 809-3853 or visit www.landcopacific.com.

14 CPA TOP PLACERS JOIN SGV

SGV & Co recently signed up 14 top placers in the October 2004 Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exams. They were welcomed by SGV chair and managing partner David L. Balangue and Human Resources partner-in-charge Gerard B. Sanvictores. In photo are (standing, from left): Balangue, Marianne G. Gonzales (13th Place, cum laude, UP Diliman), Ryan Gilbert K. Chua (4th place, cum laude, FEU), Anthony P. Dasico (17th place, magna cum laude, PLM), Mark Tristan D. Caparas (17th place, magna cum laude, UP Diliman), Desiree Joy Suarez (19th place, UST), Jessica C. Batalla (8th place, cum laude, UST) and Sanvictores; (seated from left) Reynaldo P. Abilo (11th place, cum laude, UP Diliman), Japhlet V. Paraggua (17th place, USLS) , Maria Pia C. Pagtalunan (15th place, UST), Meryl M. Mangosong (11th place, magna cum laude, UP Diliman), Divine Grace M. Manlapaz (9th place, summa cum laude, FEU), and James Patrick Q. Bonus (16th place, UST). Not in photo are Rachell D. Arzaga (5th place, cum laude, UST) and Eugene E. Layug (20th place, cum laude, UP Diliman).

Gardenia awarded as Outstanding Bread Manufacturer for 2004

GARDENIA Bakeries Phils Inc (GBPI), the country's leading bread manufacturer, was awarded as "Outstanding Bread Manufacturer" by the Consumers Union of the Philippines (CUP) on its 15th Annual National Consumers Awards (Anca), held at the Le Pavillon, Roxas Boulevard.

Gardenia's general manager Simplicio Umali Jr. received the award in recognition of the company's continuing efforts in the development of consumerism as a way of life and in acknowledging the company's exemplary performance and dedication in having constantly excelled in the food industry.

"Gardenia is once again recognized and rewarded because of our combined efforts and hard work in making sure that we provide the best products for the Filipino consumer. The award with an Anca statuette, symbolizes the consumer's appreciation for having served and championed their interest. With this, it inspires us even more to continue delivering uncompromising excellence in product quality and service," said Umali.

Since its start of operations, Gardenia has been awarded the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9001:2000 certification for quality excellence and the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) certification for food safety. Both these awards signify that the company has strengthened its commitment and continued implementation of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), ensuring that the highest international standards are followed constantly.

The Superbrands status, which was previously given to the company's counterparts in Malaysia and Singapore, was also recently awarded to Gardenia Phils that reaffirms the brand's dominance and overall acceptance in the market.

A multinational company with operations in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and other countries in Asia, Gardenia began its full operations in 1998 and has a state-of-the-art fully automated bread factory rated as the most modern large-scale bread manufacturing facility in the country.

LBC BILLS XPRESS PAYMENT SERVICE

PLDT, LBC SIGN MOA

PLDT and LBC Development Corp signed a Memorandum of Agreement for Bills Payment Over-the-Counter Collections enabling subscribers to conveniently pay their PLDT bills through LBC Bills Xpress System. PLDT bills payment are now accepted at any LBC Metro Manila outlets. Photo shows from left: PLDT's Joseph Nelson M. Ladaban, head - RBCS, Anabelle L. Chua, treasurer and senior vice president, Menardo G. Jimenez, Jr., head - RBG, LBC's Juan Carlos G. Araneta - president, Joseph Jeffrey B. Rodriguez - treasurer and Achilles Reyes - deputy- Specialized Financial Services.

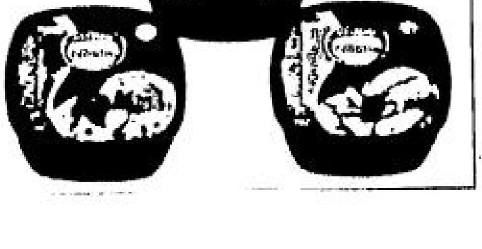
SHARP AT MODERN HOME EXPO

Sharp recently participated at the Modern Home Expo held recently at the Philippine Training Trade Center (PTTC). The exhibit gathered some of the country's distinguished companies in the fields of building and construction, architecture and design as well as home furnishings and appliances. During the exhibit, Sharp showcased its innovative Plasmacluster Ion technology, which is present in its home appliances such as air conditioners, air purifiers, refrigerators, humidifiers, and dehumidifiers. Sharp's Plasmacluster Ion technology has been proven to be effective in controlling certain viruses, fungi, allergens and other hazardous elements in the air. Through its unique air purifying system, Plasmacluster Ions are released to inactivate harmful elements by breaking down airborne water and oxygen molecules to create a balance of positive and negative ions. The technology was further discussed during the exhibitors forum attended by industry builders and designers. Shown in photo is Rochelle Blancaflor, Sharp's research analyst, explaining how the Plasmacluster Ion Technology is able to seek-out germs in the air and inactivates the same before these can cause harm to our health

ProductFILES

Nestlé Ice Cream wins 4 Golds from Monde

HERE'S the scoop: well-loved flavors of Nestlé Ice Cream such as Rocky Road, Cookies & Cream, Double Dutch and Chocolate received Gold Quality Award medals from Monde Selection. Monde Selection is an independent international institute founded in Belgium and is currently the oldest and most representative organization in the field of quality selections worldwide. Classic Filipino favorites Mango and Ube were equally honored with special awards. Moreover, when you buy any of the delightful flavors of Nestlé Ice Cream, you will find the 'Better For You' seal that guarantees 10 percent of the Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intake (Reni) of an individual's calcium needs. So Sige na... treat them!



Real Bank: Be a responsible saver

EVERY money-spending decision that you make today has a tremendous impact on your future finances. Thus, the earlier you start saving for your future, the better your future will be.

The Real Bank, one of the top thrift banks in the country, continues to do their part in ensuring national progress by teaching and shaping the future leaders of this country, our children. According to The Real Bank, saving only requires some form of discipline, ingenuity and even creativity. There are a lot of simple and easy ways to keep a firm grip on spending without being too stringent on yourself. Instead of worrying about the income you need to build up in the next 15 to 20 years, one of the best investment moves that you can concentrate on is setting up realistic goals.

There are three types of goals that you can focus on, according to the website saving-money.com, short-term goals are things that can be done soon, perhaps in a week, in a few months, but no longer than a year. For this type of goal, kids can learn to save a portion of their allowance or "baon" to save enough money to buy their immediate needs. An example of this is buying new supplies for school or saving for a gift they want for their birthday. Intermediate-term goals, on the other hand, are for things that can be saved for within 1 to 5 years. This type of goal is usually designed for the working professional. Depending on your salary range, an example of this is buying a new car or paying off your debts. And finally, the long-term goal where you hope you can achieve within 5 to 10 years. An example of this is buying a house or putting your child through college.

Just imagine if you can teach young children the value of saving and thriftiness at the earliest possible time, then you are slowly integrating in their still developing minds a very good value that they will definitely appreciate later on in life.

With The Real Bank's new advocacy campaign called "Bata......Bata......Mag-impok at Mag-sinop," a joint effort with the Department of Education (Dep-Ed), teaching school-aged children the value of thriftiness, savings and its significance to help them become productive members of the family and the community, then we can give them a better chance of a good future.

GMA NETWORK PRESIDENT SPEAKS AT ROTARY MANILA

GMA Network Inc chair, president and CEO Felipe L. Gozon spoke before the members of the Rotary Club of Manila at the Makati Shangri-la Hotel. Gozon shared his insights about the Philippine TV industry and GMA-7. He said that there are enormous talents in the country that can be harnessed to make the Philippines the Entertainment Center of Asia. Gozon added that GMA Network has continued to expand and upgrade its 46 VHF stations all over the country. The Network has been installing new equipment and infrastructure to improve the clarity of its signal and the reach of GMA stations in key areas like Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Zamboanga, and Dagupan. The Network also plans to push through its initial public offering (IPO) next year.

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS

In Compliance with RA 7041

CENTRAL RECORDS DIVISION, CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

CLERK III – Item No. OMBA CK3-44-1998; SG-6
Education: Completion of two (2) years studies in college;
Experience: None required; Training: None required; Eligibility:
Career Service Subprofessional / First Level Eligibility

Interested applicants should submit applications within twenty (20) working days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address, the following requirements pursuant to Office Order No. 05-17, series of 2005.

1) AN APPLICATION LETTER STATING THE POSITION/ITEM NUMBER APPLIED FOR;
2) DULY ACCOMPLISHED PERSONAL DATA SHEET (CSC FORM 212);
3) 1" x 1" PICTURE (COLORED);
4) BIRTH CERTIFICATE;
5) BAR RATING / CSC CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY;
6) TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS;
7) CERTIFICATES OF SEMINARS/TRAININGS ATTENDED;
8) SERVICE RECORDS OR CERTIFICATES FROM PREVIOUS/PRESENT EMPLOYERS STATING THE POSITIONS ASSUMED AND CORRESPONDING ACTUAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (IF APPLICABLE);
9) POLICE CLEARANCE
10) NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) CLEARANCE;
11) CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (CSC) CLEARANCE (ONLY FOR APPLICANTS WHO ARE OR HAVE BEEN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES);
12) RESULTS OF NEURO-PSYCHIATRIC TEST ADMINISTERED NOT EARLIER THAN SIX MONTHS FROM THE PUBLICATION OF THE POSITION; AND
13) CERTIFICATION UNDER OATH OF THE APPLICANT AS TO ANY RELATIVE(S) OF THE APPLICANT WITHIN THE FOURTH DEGREE OR CONSANGUINITY AND AFFINITY, CURRENTLY EMPLOYED WITH THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN.

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : **February 24, 2005**, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, Building-1, Ground Floor NPC-Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding for the sale of the following:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION	MIN. BID PRICE
	Schedule-I	
-1-	One (1) Lot: Used "PCB-Free" Transformer Oil and Oil Circuit Breakers, Twelve (12) sets. Located at TRANSCO-Mexico Substation, Jose Matulid, Mexico, Pampanga. **Limited only to DENR accredited Transporter and/ or Waste-Treater.**	P 4,028,430.00 per lot
-2-	Two-Year Contract of Sale of Old Records and Used Papers at NPC Head Office. Bond required is P5,000.00	P 5.00 per kg.
-3-	Two-Year Contract of Sale for Used Continuous Forms at NPC Head Office. Bond required is P2,000.00	P 9.27 per kg.
	Schedule-II	
-1-	One (1) Lot: Unserviceable, Used and Junk Substation Equipment (OCB, GCB, CT, PT, DS); General Plant Equipment and Parts, Assorted Scrap Metals and Power Cables. Located at Bataan TPP, Brgy. Luz, Limay Town, Bataan Province.	P 1,219,590.00 per lot
-2-	One (1) Lot: Obsolete Stator Coils, various sizes and Expired / Obsolete Parts, Chemicals, Spares and Materials. Located at Malaya TPP (KEPHILCO), Pililla Town, Rizal Province.	P 216,000.00 per lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIERS' CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2003 or 2004) ORIGINAL OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY.
3. BIDDERS FOR ITEM-1 SCHEDULE I MUST PRESENT EMB-DENR ACCREDITATION AS HAZ-WASTE TRANSPORTER AND/OR TREATER (ORIGINAL MUST BE PRESENTED).

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00 / Schedule from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. / Mr. Al Plata at MMD, Ground floor, Bldg.-1, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 PM, February 23, 2005.

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) **FELIX B. TACATA, JR.**
OIC, MMD

(PDI – February 9, 10 & 11, 2005)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID AD NO. 2005-001

PD Ref No. PB050120-RM006 / **PR No.:** TSD-04-008632

The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE FOR HEAD OFFICE,** wishes to invite interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid on the items listed below:

Quantity	Item Description	PR No.	Approved Budget
One (1) Lot	SERVICE CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF LABOR AND MATERIALS FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXPANSION OF CENTRAL ENGINEERING LABORATORY BUILDING IN BANILAD; CEBU	TSD-04-008632	P 5,501,434.00

1 Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Documents will be available for issuance starting **February 10, 2005 to February 23, 2005, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM** at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corp., Ground Floor, TransCo Main Building, Quezon Avenue, corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon presentation of original PCAB License Registration of at least **"CATEGORY D"** and **"SMALL B"** and a payment of non-refundable fee of **FIVE HUNDRED Pesos (P500.00)** per set.

2. Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent, duly accomplished Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Documents shall be on or before **February 24, 2005, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM** and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. Opening of the Eligibility Envelope shall be on **February 25, 2005, 10:00 AM.** If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be announced through a Bid Bulletin. Submission of documents must be clear, legible and readable. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted. ELIGIBLE bidders shall be notified on or before **March 11, 2005.**

3. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by ELIGIBLE bidders from **March 14, 2005 to April 4, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **ONE THOUSAND Pesos (P1,000.00).**

4. Submission of Technical and Price Proposals of eligible bidders shall be at **10:00 AM on April 5, 2005** at National Transmission Corporation, Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. The technical proposal will be opened immediately in the presence of Bidder's representative who chooses to attend.

5. Pre-bid conference will be held on **March 21, 2005, 10:00 AM** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

6. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding and evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.

7. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.

8. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – February 10 & 16, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region VII, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, Region VII, Cebu City is inviting all interested licensed operators of vessels/barges whether owned through Bareboat/Time/Voyage Charter to apply for eligibility and to bid under the Letter of Agreement for Vessel/Barge Hire for the remaining balance of 2005 rice shipment from Cebu City to various destinations as indicated below:

VOLUME SCHEDULED FOR SEA DISPERSAL

DESTINATION		No. of Lots	Maximum Quantity/Lot (bags)	Freight Rate/bag	Approved Budget for the Contract per Lot
Province	Port				
Camotes Is.	Poro	4	17,500	16.70	292,250.00
Bohol	Ubay	3	4,000	17.40	69,600.00
S. Leyte	Baybay	1	15,000	21.50	322,500.00
W. Samar	Calbayog	2	40,000	24.40	976,000.00
	Calbalogan	2	24,000	24.40	585,600.00
E. Samar	Borongan	2	45,000	32.50	1,462,500.00

Summary of Bidding Procedures:

The bidding shall be governed by RA 9184. A Single Stage, Two Envelope System of evaluation will be adopted. Envelope A shall contain the eligibility requirements as specified in the Instruction to Bidders which will be evaluated in a non-discretionary "Pass" or "Fail" criteria. Only those who complied with all the requirements shall be declared "Eligible" and shall proceed to the next phase which is the opening of Envelope B. Envelope B shall contain the accomplished and signed Bid Form.

Bids will be ranked from lowest to highest on a per lot basis to determine the Lowest Calculated Bid. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall undergo post qualification by the Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) to verify, validate and ascertain statements made and documents submitted in the eligibility requirements. After which, the bidder shall be declared "Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid" and shall be recommended for awarding of contract.

Schedule of Activities:

Activity	Date	Time
Issuance of Bidding Documents	Feb. 10/05 - Feb. 21/05	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Pre-Bidding Conference	February 22, 2005	10:00 AM
Submission & Opening of Bids	March 09, 2005	10:00 AM

Interested bidders may secure the bidding documents from the RBAC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., NFA, Region VII, Cebu City after payment of a non-transferable, non-refundable application fee of P5,000.00. Bidders or their authorized representatives are required to be present during the opening of sealed bids. For further inquiries, you may call the undersigned in any of the following numbers: (032) 232-1939; (032) 232-6832.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any informality or defect found therein, and may accept bids which are deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) PIOLITO C. SANTOS
Assistant Regional Director /
RBAC Chairman

(PDI - February 10 & 17, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

It has come to our knowledge that some parties are offering the following properties for sale or mortgage whose titles are being reconstituted:

Real Properties	TCT No.	Owner
House & Lot, No. 3 Solar St., Bel-Air Village, Makati City	203613	Billpaultin Corp.
Lot w/ improvements, Brgy. Longos, Dagat-dagatan, Malabon	28906	Billpaultin Corp.
Lot w/ improvements, Brgy. Longos, Dagat-dagatan, Malabon	28907	Billpaultin Corp.

The above-mentioned properties are neither for sale nor for mortgage.

THE MANAGEMENT
BILLPAULTIN FUTURE HOLDINGS, INC.

(PDI – February 10, 2005)

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Thailand Campus

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From the world's foremost authority

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starts April 4, 2005

GIA Thailand Campus

Bisco Tower-12th Fl., 56/12 Sub Rd., Bangrak, Bangkok Thailand
Tel: (662) 237-9575 / 77 Fax: (662) 236-9829
giathai@ksc.th.com www.giathailand.com

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
METRO COTABATO WATER DISTRICT
Cotabato City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Metro Cotabato Water District invites interested and legitimate Suppliers/ parties to submit bid proposal (2 sealed envelopes) for the following projects:

BID NO.		NAME OF PROJECT	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
01	1 lot	Supply, delivery and installation of electric motors and its assemblies for flocculator and rapid mixer drives, motor controls complete with standard accessories, rapid mixers and flocculators or as per technical specifications and drawings.	Php 963, 500.00
02	2 lots	Supply, delivery and installation of dosing pump, motor controls complete with standard accessories as per technical specifications and drawing.	Php 998, 000.00
	2 lots	Supply, delivery and installation of Polyethylene (PE) tank complete with stirrer, stirrer controls and other accessories as shown on plans and as specified.	

Interested parties may secure Bid Documents and Detailed Specifications upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 500.00 during office hours at Metro Cotabato Water District, Governor Gutierrez Avenue, Cotabato City with Tel. Nos. (064) 4213566/ 4211070.

The schedule of bidding activities is as follows:

PARTICULAR	DATE/TIME
Issuance of Bid Documents	February 11 to 18, 2005
Opening / Submission of Bids	February 23, 2005

The criteria to be used by BAC in the eligibility check of prospective bidders shall be non-discretionary "Pass / Fail" basis.

The MCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the MCWD. The MCWD likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd) **MANUEL D. MAGDAEL**
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – Feb. 03 & 10, 2005)

JPIA Week 2005

THE UP Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants (UPJPIA), one of the top student organizations in the University of the Philippines, in conjunction with TXTUBE and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and also presented by Nissin's Yakisoba, invites you to JPIA Week 2005, a weeklong series of events commemorating the 46th anniversary of the organization. From Feb. 20 to 25, witness as UPJPIA, in line with its thrust of Exemplifying Excellence, celebrates its time-honored tradition of pride and passion

with a variety of projects that display the distinct brand of fun that the organization is known throughout the university for. Watch out for the complete line-up of events in the formal launching of JPIA Week '05 on Feb. 11 at the UP Balay Kalinaw. All alumni are invited to attend. For any inquiries, please contact Janrich Vasquez (0917-8404705) or Mak Asinas (0916-7354327), or come by the UPJPIA Office, Room 406, College of Business Administration, UP Diliman.

TRABAHONG INHINYERO, PROGRESIBONG PILIPINAS

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Philippine Society of Mechanical Engineers (PSME)
Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers (PICE)

This event is organized by
Engineering College Assembly (ECA) of DLSU
Engineering Student Council (ESC) of UST

Pre-registration for the event is on-going. Send an e-mail to *prereg@inhinyero.com* with your *name, course, school and contact details.* Pre-registered participants will be provided with a handy fair guidebook via e-mail.

Thesis exposition is open to all engineering fields. If you would like to exhibit your project, e-mail *exposition@inhinyero.com.* A screening process applies to all projects.

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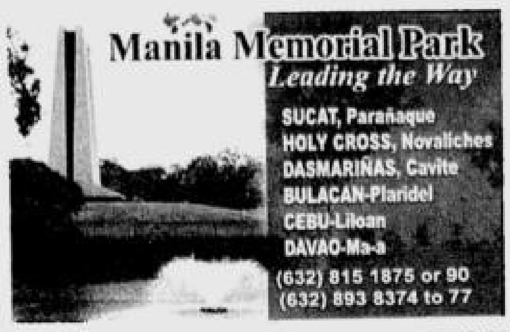

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ISIDRO "ROY" HOJAS ESCAÑO

of Cagayan de Oro City

on his 23rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY
on February 10, 2005

Masses will be offered today, Thursday, February 10, 2005 at the following churches:

Greenhills Memorial Park, Bulua	4:00 p.m.
San Vicente Ferrer, Cugman	6:00 a.m.
San Isidro Labrador, Gusa	6:00 a.m.
Jesus Nazareno Parish	5:30 p.m.
Our Lady of Fatima, Camaman-an	6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Carmen	6:00 a.m.
St. Augustine Cathedral	5:00 p.m.
San Antonio de Padua y Nazareth	6:00 a.m.
Sto. Niño Parish, Cogon	6:00 a.m.
Immaculate Conception, Bulua	6:00 a.m.
Carmelite Monastery, Camaman-an	6:00 a.m.
Carmelite Monastery, Bukidnon	6:30 a.m.

We, his relatives, request the friends and pious reader to join us in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

ARMENGOL G. DATOR

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on February 8, 2005 at the age of 93.

His wife **Seferina** (†); children **Edna, Eva, Emma, Carlos** and **Antonio**; grandchildren and great grandchildren, other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel M, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 12, 2005 at the South Cemetery, South Avenue, Makati City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Loyola Memorial Chapel.

> *"For God so loved the world, that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have Everlasting life."*
>
> —John 3:16

Our Dearly beloved Mother

NORMA CRUZ PANCHO

of Baliwag, Bulacan

Peacefully joined her Creator at 1:00 a.m.
on February 9, 2005 at the age of 71.

Her loving husband **CONGRESSMAN PEDRO M. PANCHO**; children **MIA & CRIS WAN, TINA, BONG & TRICIA, ONGIE & VALERIE, PATRICK, JOVY & APOL**; grandchildren **LARISSE, JANEL, VICTOR, VERNICE & ROCKY** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence, 001 Rizal St., Poblacion, Baliwag, Bulacan.

Interment will be on February 13, 2005 at Baliwag, Catholic Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at St. Augustine Parish Church, Baliwag.

Cipriano M. Figueras

*was given the Grace to join his wife **Conchita***
in the eternal banquet of life at the age of 81
on 8 February 2005.

His loving children **Bi** & **Georgie**, **Terry** & **John**, **Mar** & **Flora**, **Alice** & **Sam**, **Dang** and **Poch** & **Noel**; sisters **Nenita** and **Tita**; grandchildren and great grandchildren request friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Christ The King Chapel, Greenmeadows Ave., Quezon City.

Funeral mass will be celebrated at 9 a.m., Sunday, 13 February 2005.

CALIXTA "CALING" MAGSARILI - ALCASID

Peacefully joined our Creator on February 8, 2005
at the age of 88.

Her beloved husband, **Eliseo**; children **Lino & Fe**; children-in-law **Yolan Lazaro & Ike Fajutrao**; grandchildren **Patrick & Ann Alcasid, Adette, Donny & Deri Fajutrao**; grandchildren-in-law **Niña Alberto & Raffy Borromeo**; sisters **Consuelo Ferrer & Virginia Aguirre**; in-laws **Flora N. Alcasid, Salome A. Magsarili & Jose Aguirre**; relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Laguna Memorial Chapels (Mortuary near St. John the Baptist Catholic Church), Calamba, Laguna.

Funeral Mass at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 13, 2005 at the Mortuary. Interment follows at the Rizal Memorial Park.

"The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want; Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil for You are with me."

> "Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, Keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."
>
> — Psalm 21:15

HIS EXCELLENCY, MOST REV. GAUDENCIO B. ROSALES, D.D.
Archbishop of Manila

The clergy of the Archdiocese of Manila; bereaved brothers & sisters-in-law: **Porfirio & Otelia, Father Felipe**, and **Remigio & Norma**; sisters & brothers-in-law: **Lilia & Petronilo, Nenita, Marietta, Leticia & Alfredo** and **Virgilia & Wilfredo**; nieces; nephews; grandchildren; relatives and friends

deeply mourn the demise of

REV. FR. ROGELIO ATRAZO PARIAN

who died on February 6, 2005 at the age of 53.

His body now lies in state in his hometown at Don Tiburcio Lutero Street, Janiuay, Iloilo.

Funeral Mass will be on Monday, February 21, 2005, 9:00 A.M., at Saint Julian Parish Church, Janiuay, Iloilo to be celebrated by Rev. Fr. Felipe A. Parian, Jr. Interment will follow at the Janiuay Cemetery, Janiuay, Iloilo.

The faithful are requested to pray for the repose of his soul.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
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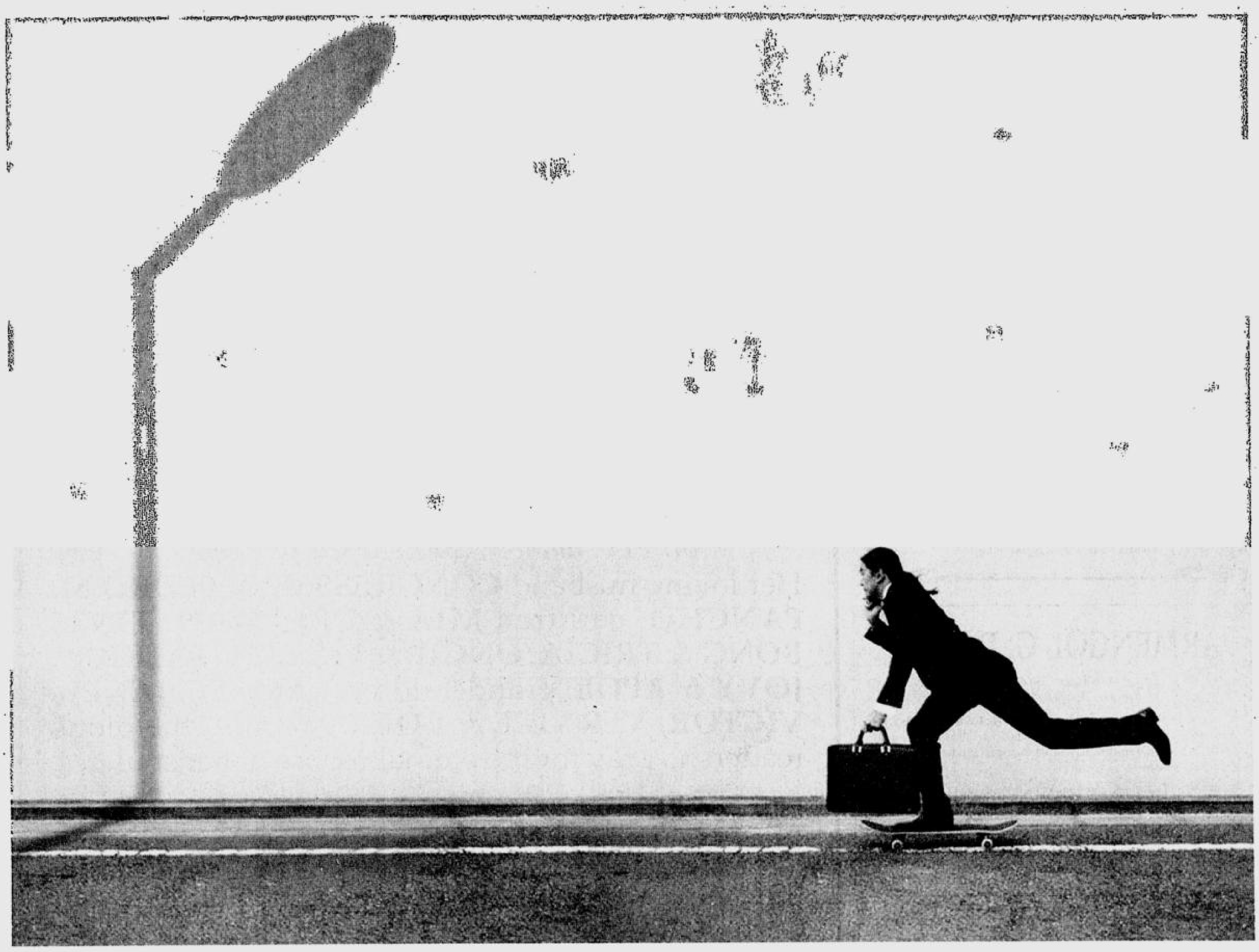

Goodbye, Office

The Age of Working @ Wherever.

Is It Finally Here?

In the beginning, there was the pager, fax, then the cellphone. And then people started talking, dreaming, that one day the commute to work, the slog of the daily mind-numbing grind would be gone forever.

The concept of a worker-enabled future is nothing new, with disturbing extremes. Orwell painted the bleakest of pictures when his 1984 proposed a vapid gray conformity, in which people were rendered drones, humming to an industrial nightmare. Huxley's Brave New World took it further, dictating the worker's career and fate in vitro. It was all about the dark shadow of control, mainly of a state or corporation's control over us.

Of course the real 1984 came and went without Big Brother, even as liberal doomsayers pointed to Reagan's CIA or Microsoft. The truth is Big Brother got a spanking as a little kid. Just as the economy's pace quickened, demanding greater hours, new tools arrived on the scene, with their vast potentials not fully understood, even by its creators.

Today for example, the jury is out whether the Internet is being used as another Orwellian tool or if this wonderful place will finally "set us free" from our daily grind.

If you take a wireless network, bundle it with the vast capabilities of fiber optics, then yes, you're freed. We've taken an objective look into the PLDT WeRoam phenomenon with many of Manila's leaders of industry. Their one common realization: with PLDT WeRoam, shorter hours at the office actually translate into a stronger bottom line.

The one striking feature about PLDT WeRoam is that it isn't another piece of technological exotica. Instead it's a tight little package of both relatively new and existing reliable platforms. "Basically PLDT WeRoam is the strongest product born from the convergence of PLDT and SMART," says Eric Alberto SVP of PLDT Corporate Business Group. "It combines PLDT's massive broadband IP infrastructure with SMART's unmatched wireless coverage using GPRS, EDGE and WIFI technologies."

And that's PLDT WeRoam in a nutshell: a wherever, anywhere link to either the internet or your company's LAN through a combination of wireless and fiber-optic. "The technology, although considerable, really matters little compared to the end-benefit to the consumer," says one Silicon Valley VC. "Businesses are going to judge that benefit according to an improvement in operations efficiency and the bottom line."

Ah yes, the bottom line, the unassailable final standard any application has to be judged by. We've asked a key business user of WeRoam for an evaluation. If the proof is in the pudding then you're holding it. Newspapers are one of the most deadline-intensive shops in the world, with operatives (reporters and photographers) stationed in remote areas.

"We've used WeRoam for only a week and already we're seeing an improvement," says one broadsheet Vice President, "before our reporters used to have to locate an internet café in the middle of a disaster area just to send material." Today, with PLDT WeRoam wireless broadband connection, notebook PCs or even handhelds like PDAs can send stories or pics and even streaming video anywhere in the Philippines. The delivery of the news is now transformed forever.

This is the future now. It's the age of the wireless broadband internet, where you're@everywhere. And it's just beginning; we'll keep you posted..

■ **Walter Ray Choi**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

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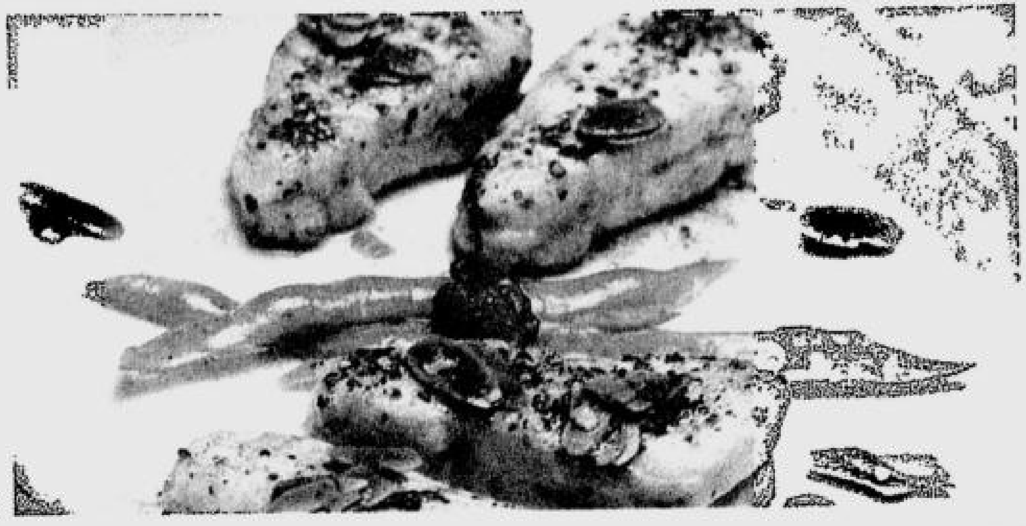
SLOW-COOKED lamb shanks

The latest innovations of chef Vicky Rose Pacheco celebrates good food, togetherness and camaraderie


TANIGUE Amandine

Menu makeover marks resto's 17th year

CHATEAU 1771 has come up with a major menu modification to celebrate its 17th anniversary.

Its new offerings include set menus with different themes that encourage food sharing.

The latest innovations of chef Vicky Rose Pacheco, granddaughter of the legendary restaurateur "Mama Sita" Reyes, celebrates not just good food but also togetherness and camaraderie.

Chateau 1771's set menus include a pasta and salad set; a healthy, high-fiber selection; an Italian menu; a fish and seafood assembly; and a collection of chicken entrees.

Here are some recipes from the restaurant's menu:

Slow-cooked lamb shanks

4 pcs lamb shank, whole
1 tsp rock salt
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
2 tsp fresh rosemary, chopped
1 ½ tsp fresh oregano
1 tbsp flour
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tsp garlic, chopped
3 pcs carrots, quartered and finely sliced
3 stalks celery, no leaves, finely sliced
3 pcs red onions, finely chopped
½ tsp rock salt
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
¾ cup dry white wine
6 fillets anchovies, drained, chopped
2 sml cans crushed plum tomatoes
2 c purified water

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Rub the shanks all around with salt and pepper. Combine the rosemary and oregano and roll the shanks in the mixture, pressing firmly. Dust with flour and set aside.

Film a roasting pan with olive oil and heat on stove. Brown the meat on both sides, then remove from the pan. Add the garlic, carrots, celery and onions and cook until softened, stirring constantly. Season with salt. Add balsamic vinegar and reduce to a syrup.

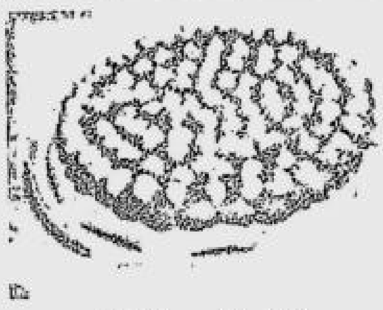
Pour the white wine and simmer for two minutes. Add the anchovies and mix. Add the crushed tomatoes and water. Return the lamb to the pan, cover it and cook in oven for approximately 1½ hours at 350°F.

When lamb meat is tender, re

MENU/ C3

CHEF Vicky Rose Pacheco

MANGO TORTE EXTRAORDINAIRE



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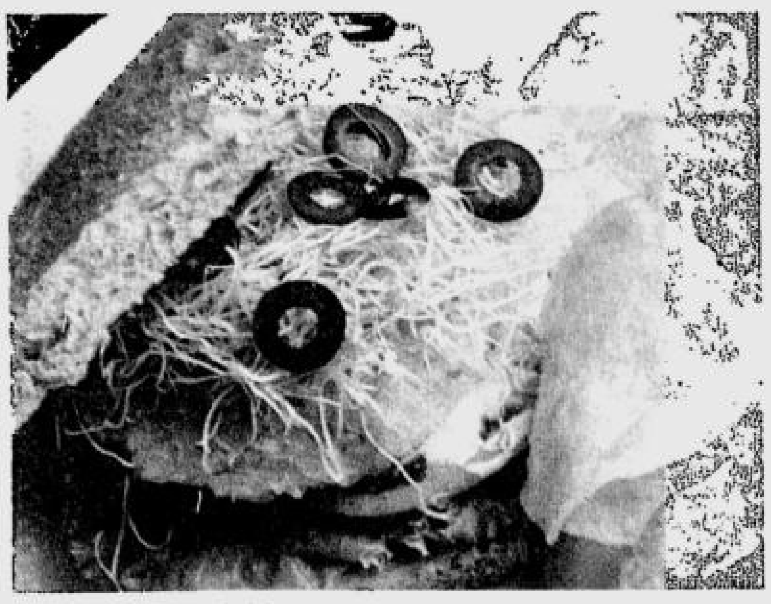
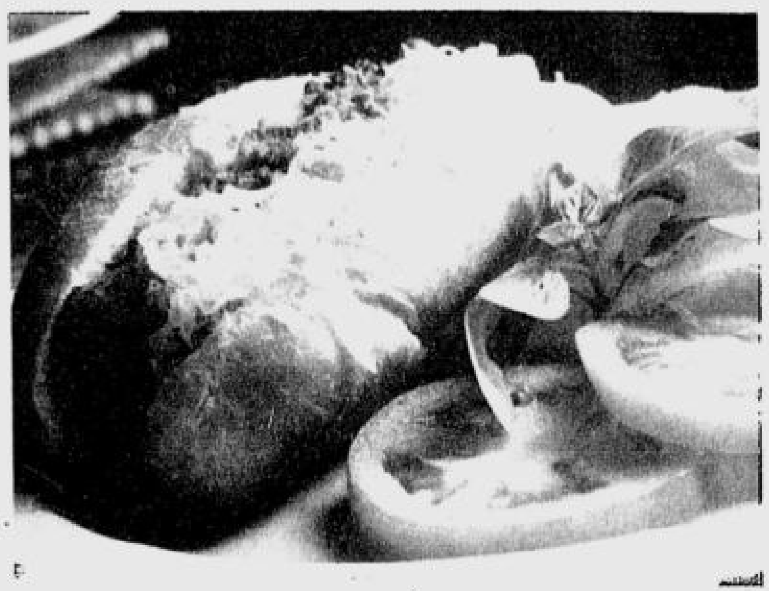


LARRY'S King Sandwich

TENDERLOIN Steak Sandwich



CHILI CON Schublig

MUSHROOM Pizzaiolo

HAM and Swiss Cheese with Pesto Balsamico

Is it a sandwich or is it a meal?

THE LJC group has created new sandwiches to make merienda—or even a light meal—more interesting.

These are: S.B.L.T. (Shrimp, Bacon, Lettuce, and Tomato on Toast), P250; Bruschetta Anna *Quesong Puti* (pesto, garlic, and black olives on farmer's bread), P130; Beef *Salpicao* on Toast (tender beef *salpicao* with fresh arugula on farmer's bread with aioli sauce), P225; Tenderloin Steak Sandwich (grilled beef tenderloin with red and green bell peppers, onions, and emmenthal cheese on baguette), P275; and Chili con Schublig (German sausage with chili con carne, pickled papaya and emmenthal cheese on bun), P225; and Mushroom Pizzaiolo (Shiitake, button, and wood ear mushrooms on *ciabatta* bread toast with tomato and parmesan cheese), P150; Ham and Swiss Cheese with Pesto Balsamico (sweet ham and emmenthal cheese on toasted *ciabatta* bread served with tomatoes, cucumber, and onion salad with pesto balsamic dressing), P275; and Larry King's Sandwich (pan-grilled shrimp patty on wheat bread with tartar sauce and alfalfa sprouts), P275.

Learn Italian cooking–and history

MAYA Kitchen will take you on a historical exploration of la cucina Italiana on "Italian Sampler," 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Feb. 12.

Learn how to prepare Italian classics from the simple Lasagna, Cannelloni, Ravioli, and Fettuccine al fresco to pasta sauces such as Pesto, Puttanesca and Carbonara.

In the afternoon, 1:30-5 p.m., learn pizza dough and sauce recipes in "Pizza-Pizza." Learn how to prepare Chicago-style, Deep-pan Pizza, Mushroom-tuna Stuffed Pizza Turnover and No-bake Pizza. Class will cover toppings with estimated costing.

"Super Meringue" covers Sylvannas, Canonigo, Sans Rival, Pavlova, Brazo de Mercedes, Lemon-Meringue Pie and Meringue Cookies.

On Feb. 15-18, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., "Cooking I" will be offered. The course will cover proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; stocks, soups and sauces and their 1001 application to poultry, fish, shellfish, fruits and vegetables; common herbs and spices; purchasing; marketing and proper storage; menu planning; simple garnish and plate presentation.

Plus, actual cooking workshop will cover the preparation of dishes from appetizer to dessert.

At 2-5:30 p.m., "Baking I" will cover the basics of baking including techniques in preparation of bread, quickbread, pies, cakes and more. Free cookbook will be given to participants.

Interested parties may visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays-Saturdays), 8/F Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City, or call 8921185 or 8925011 loc. 108. Or you may also send e-mail to mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph.

Caribbean and orgasmic cooking

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts is offering the following classes:

FEB. 11: Caribbean Cooking 101, Part 2 (all new)—*Rabo Encindido*, Authentic *Arroz a la Cubana*, Jerk Chicken with Mango Salsa, Grilled Crabs with Lime and Mango Butter, Coconut Shrimp Rice, Rice Pudding, Rum and Fruit Punch

Feb. 12: Chicken Wings—The Ultimate Buffalo, Teriyaki, Ginger with Peanut Sauce, Sweet and Spicy, Chili, Garlic with Garlic Sauce, Honey and Soy, Maple Teriyaki; side dishes, drinks, dessert

Feb. 14: Orgasmic Pleasures for Two—Kobe Beef (all new)—Cook your own dinner—Foie Gras Gently Skewered and Basted with Teriyaki Sauce and Tender Slices of Prized Kobe Beef served with three sauces (wasabi-soy, miso and garlic); Bonus recipe: Kobe Beef Sukiyaki

Feb. 16: Noodles (all new)—Green Tea Duck Noodles, My Decadent Pancit Guisado, *Adobong Pusit* in Black Glass Noodles with Garlic Olive Oil, Sukiyaki Style, Dried Scallop Noodles, Stir-fried Noodles with Angus Beef and Mushrooms

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THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

WE still cannot understand why it takes a very long time before a new law is fully implemented. The massive food fortification law, for example, was signed in November 2000 but mandatory compliance took effect only last November.

Supposedly, the law, which requires the addition of nutrients to processed food, is the government's answer to the problem of micronutrient deficiency in the country.

Whatever the reason, we're only too happy to pass on the news that, with the full implementation of the food fortification program, processed foods could now be expected to be fortified with micronutrients lacking in the Filipino diet—Vitamin A, iron, and iodine.

Specifically, the law requires that basic ingredients like flour, sugar, and edible oil should be enriched with Vitamin A, and rice with iron.

We have high hopes that the food fortification program of the government will complement the existing *Asin* Law and the Sangkap Pinoy Seal Program.

The *Asin* law requires the addition of iodine in salt. Under the Sangkap Pinoy program, manufacturers who voluntarily fortify their products with micronutrients get a diamond-shaped seal stamped on their packages.

By the way, micronutrients are vitamins and minerals that the body needs only in small quantities but are essential for physical and mental health. Malnutrition is a major concern in developing countries where people lack access to proper food.

The most prevalent type of malnutrition is micronutrient deficiency. Children below six years old and mothers of reproductive age are the most affected groups.

The massive food fortification program is a joint endeavor of the Department of Health, the United Nations Children's Fund, United States Agency for International Development, and Asian Development Bank.

Surviving a tire blowout

Presence of mind and good reflexes saved motorist Benjie Angeles from a serious accident when his tire, a Hankook 529-0199, exploded while he was driving along C-5.

"I bought this brand of tires because of its high performance rating. To this day, I cannot explain why it exploded. The tire is beyond repair now," he said.

Angeles advises other motorists to concentrate on their driving and not to panic when a tire explodes.

TV's influence

Comment from an e-mail sender: "ABS-CBN and GMA networks should hire somebody to teach their talents GMRC or good moral and right conduct. I noticed, for example, that some male TV performers and hosts of top-rated noontime shows took the liberty of embracing or kissing the cheeks of female contestants."

The reader gave the following advice to television performers:

- Male hosts of TV shows should keep their hands off female contestants and guests unless the situation calls for it.
- It should be a big No to make fun of a person's physical defect, handicap, gender.
- They should not talk when their mouths' full of food; neither should they chew gum in front of the camera.
- It is bad manners to point a finger at the face of a person or at the camera lens.

A teacher and former principal of a private school asked us to call the attention of ad makers on correct pronunciation in radio-TV ads. She commented: "The teacher in me refuses to keep silent when I hear wrong pronunciation—grammar, too—in broadcast ads. More to the point, the word Graham in the MY San ad of Graham cracker should be pronounced with a silent H and a short A."

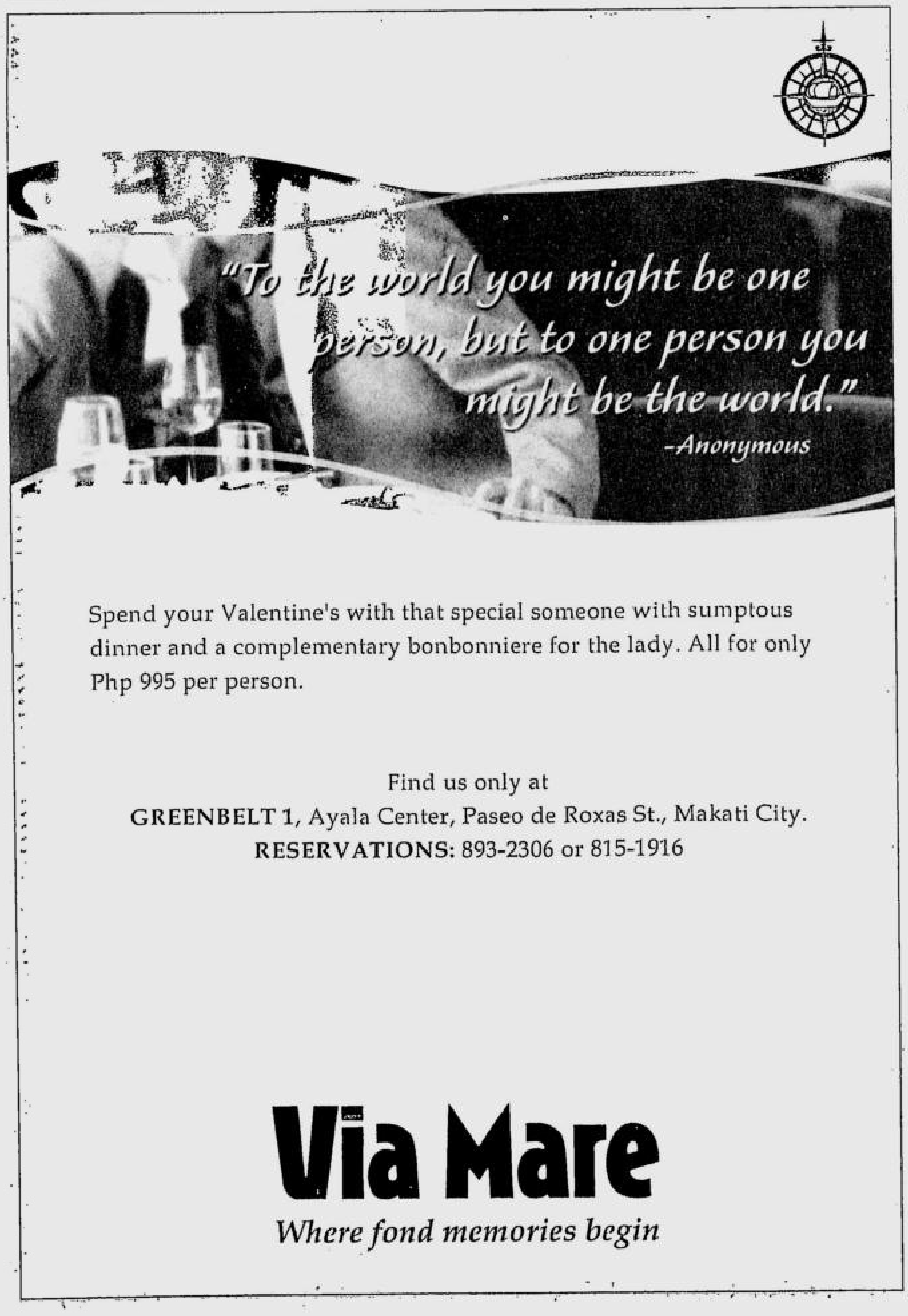
On this issue, a journalist friend has been wanting to call the attention of a woman announcer of a FM radio station who keeps saying "another sets of light rock."

Prompt response

Thanks to the following for promptly taking care of the complaint of a reader regarding the delayed delivery of the Nokia cell phone he won in a golf tournament in Baguio City: Wo Rosete (media relations head), Noel Mortal (manager, Baguio Wireless Center), and Terence Concepcion (marketing events).

Our special thanks to Lori Pascual of Tridel Company for the technical support and assistance as we fumbled with our newly reformatted computer software, and to media person Danny Escasa for his expert comment about computer anti-virus programs.

Send e-mail to mariettagiron@hotmail.com.


"To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world."
-Anonymous

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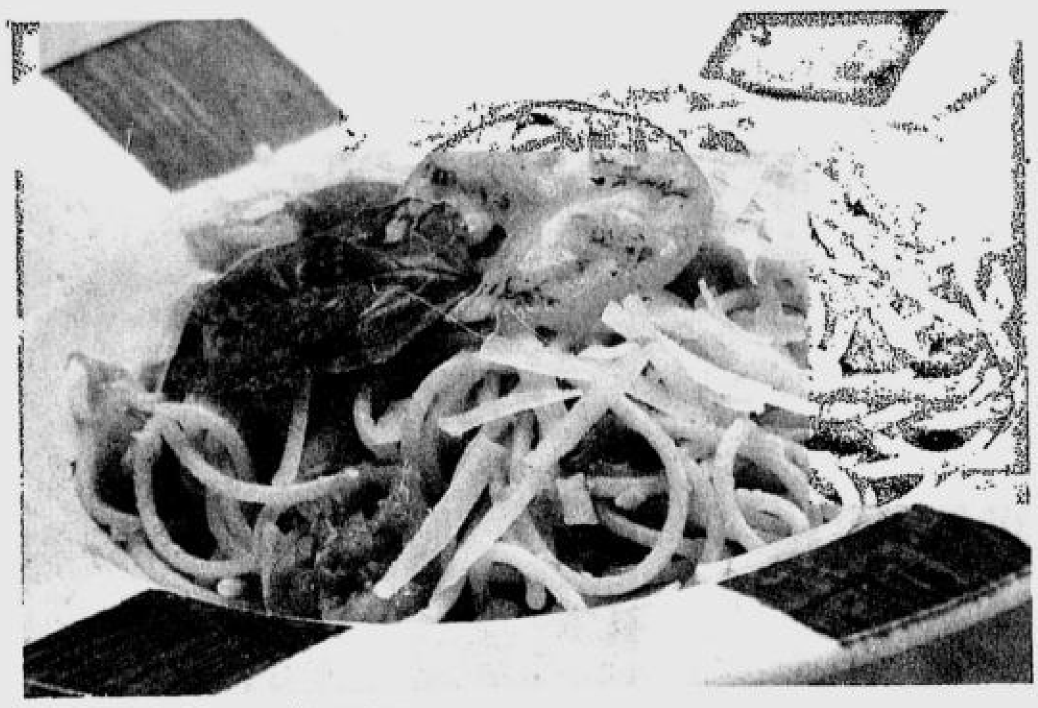
JOB Market



SPAGHETTI with roasted tomatoes

Menu makeover marks resto's 17th year

From page C1

move the lid and cook for 20 minutes more. Skim off fat and taste then adjust seasoning. Serves 4.

Spaghetti with Roasted Tomatoes

Preheat oven at 350°F.

Roasted Tomatoes

½ k ripe native tomatoes, halved
6 cloves whole garlic, unpeeled
¼ c extra virgin olive oil
2 sprigs fresh thyme or ½ tsp dried thyme leaves
salt to taste
freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a bowl, toss together tomatoes, olive oil, salt, pepper and thyme. Then in a roasting pan or baking sheet, place the tomatoes cut side down in neat rows. Pour olive oil over and scatter the garlic.

Roast the tomatoes until the skin can be peeled off effortlessly. Take off the skin, lower the heat to 275°F and continue to roast until semi-dry. Save the drippings.

Prepare a pot of boiling water for the pasta to be blanched right before it is tossed. You must have a strainer with long handle or a colander.

To make the topping:

2/3 c roasted tomatoes
4 pcs roasted garlic, peeled but whole
Salt to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
Sugar to taste

Roasted Tomato Drippings

Combine roasted tomatoes and roasted garlic in a saucepan over low heat.

Season with salt, pepper and sugar. Don't make it sweet. Pour roasted tomato drippings to moisten but not to make dish saucy. Set aside.

Cooking the Pasta

2 tsp garlic, chopped
1½ tbsp extra virgin olive oil
200 g spaghetti, cooked al dente
Salt to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 tbsp grated parmesan cheese
1 sprig basil

In a sauté pan, brown the garlic. Blanch the pasta quickly in boiling water, shake off excess water, and add to the pan, stirring briskly while breaking the pasta. Season with salt and pepper. Turn off the fire and add the 1 tbsp parmesan cheese. Taste and adjust seasoning. Transfer to a pasta bowl. Heat the roasted tomato topping and top the pasta with it.

Garnish with a basil sprig. Add parmesan cheese if desired. Serves 1.

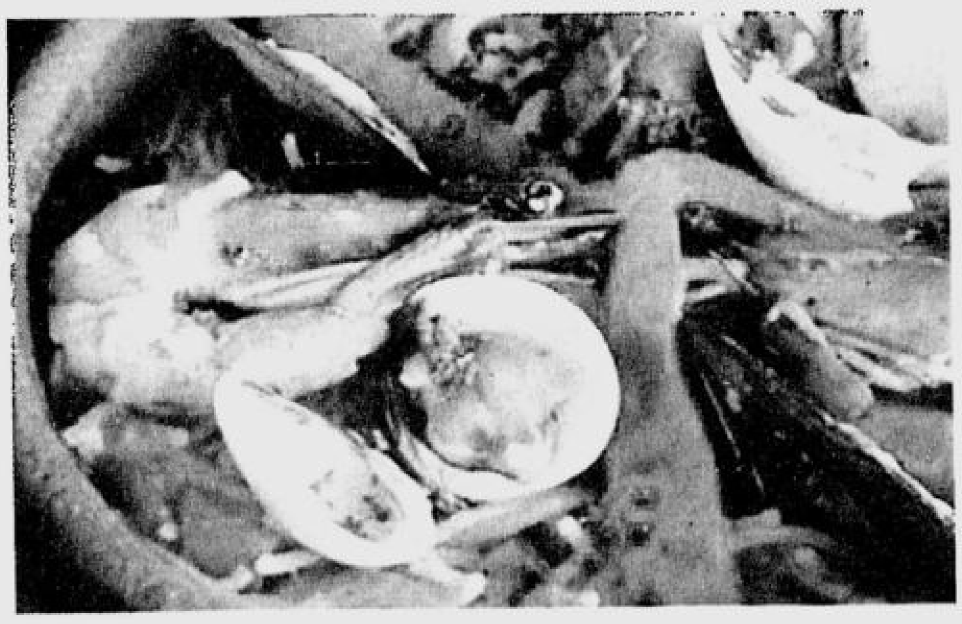
Tanigue Amandine

200 g tanigue, loin cut, skinless, boneless, cut into 4
1/8 tsp black peppercorn, crushed coarsely
1/8 tsp white or green or red peppercorn, crushed coarsely
¼ tsp salt
1 tbsp corn oil
2 tbsp butter, softened
1 tsp yellow lemon juice
1 tbsp toasted slivered almonds
salt to taste
freshly ground black pepper to taste

Pat the fish pieces dry. Mix the two kinds of peppercorn. Pat the peppercorn mix on both sides of the fish pieces, and do the same with the salt. You don't have to use all the pepper and salt.

Heat oil in a frying pan. When oil is hot, add the fish in one layer. Cook on medium heat until both sides are browned but not overcooked. Place fish on serving dish when done. In the same pan, melt the butter over low heat (do not boil) then add the lemon juice.

Add the almonds and mix. Turn off the fire immediately and season with salt and pepper. Serves 2.



Cirkulo's special menu for Valentine

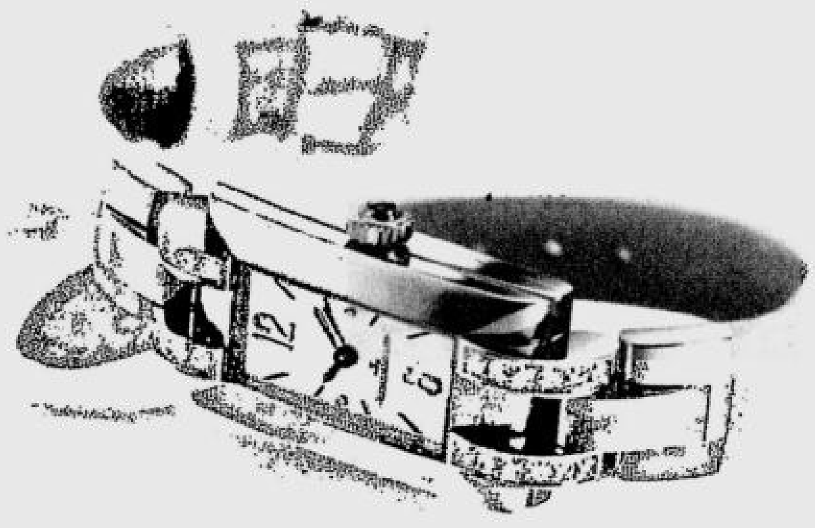
CIRKULO will serve a special set menu on Feb. 12-14. The menu: Pan-fried Duck Liver on Toast with Balsamic Vinegar Syrup; Gorgonzola and Apple Salad with Mesclun Greens and Walnuts; Choice of Pan Fried Apahap Fillet with Caper Buerre Blanc, or Slow Roasted US Beef Belly with Garlic and Black Pepper Crust, Portabella Mushrooms, Balsamic Shallots; and Warm Peanut Butter Chocolate Truffle Cake with Glazed Banana and Banana Caramel Ice Cream. Its February Specials include: Wagyu Corned Beef Pot Au Feu (Boiled US Wagyu Beef Belly, Baby Vegetables, Beef Broth); Foie Gras Sandwich (Duck Liver Terrine, Crispy Parma Ham, Fig Jam, Toasted Brioche); Coddled Egg and Asparagus (Crispy Jamon Serrano and Asparagus Sticks); Fideua Alicantina (Pasta Seafood Paella, Baby Prawns, Mussels, Clams, Saffron); Exotic Mushrooms on Spaghetti (Hen of the Woods, Shimeji, and Eringi Mushrooms with Olive Oil, Garlic, Sweet Onions, Chili); PBB (Warm Chocolate Cake, Peanut Butter and Chocolate Center, Caramel Banana); Sticky Caramel Tart (Chocolate Shortcrust, Chai Spice Ganache, Sea Salt); and Orange Ice Cream "Drumstick" (House-made Orange Ice Cream, Callebaut Liquid Chocolate Crunch, Orange Butter Sauce, Pizzelle "Cone"). Cirkulo is at 900 Pasay Road, Makati. Call 8108735/8102763.

Sing for a free Valentine dinner

RED Box Karaoke at the third level of Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati City, is offering customers free dinner buffet as part of its Valentine's Day treat.

The buffet will include cheesy Baked Mussels, Penne Pomodoro, Roasted Chicken with Orange, Mojo Potatoes and Jasmine Rice.

For Valentine, Red Box Karaoke has a new cocktail, "Strawberry Tease", that is good for two. It combines the flavor of fresh strawberries, lemon juice and vodka. Guests get to bring home a generously-sized margarita glass. Red Box Karaoke (7576188) is open daily 12 noon to 3 a.m.



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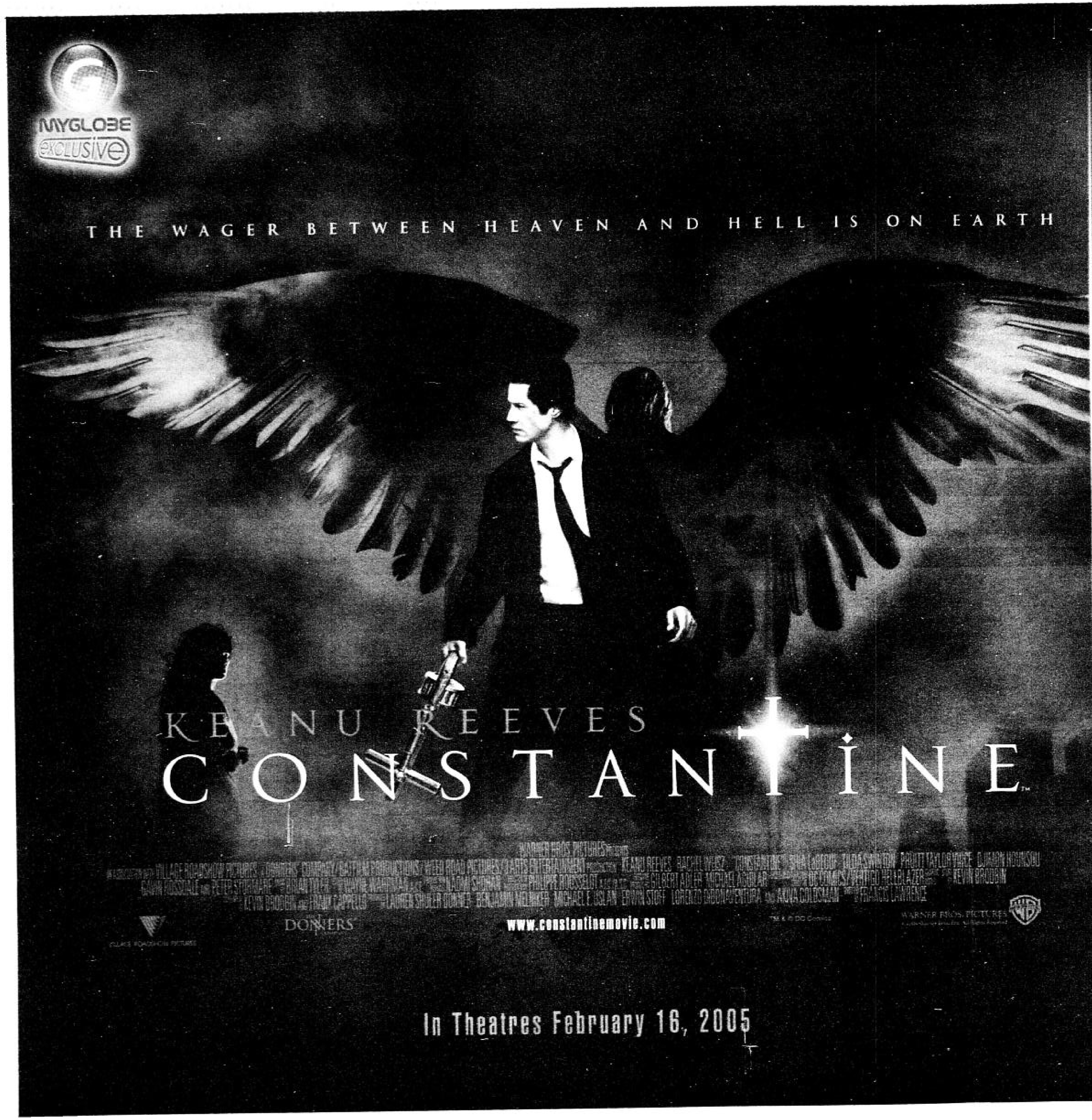
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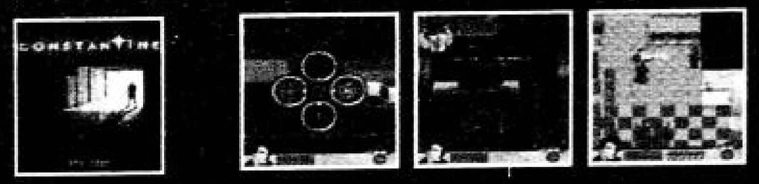

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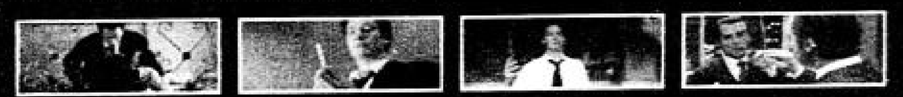
TRUE TONES:

WAP Link	Content
possessed	(devil's words)
die young	You're going to die young because...
2mins in hell	Take it from me -- two minutes in hell is a lifetime.
breaks the rule	So when a half-breed breaks the rules...
collect myself	...I will come up here to collect myself
no turning back	If you do this, there's no turning back.
they see you	You see them, they see you.
devil haunt	(muffled sound)
phone ring	(different phones ringing simultaneously)
scream	(scream)

VIDEO STREAMING*:



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LIFESTYLE

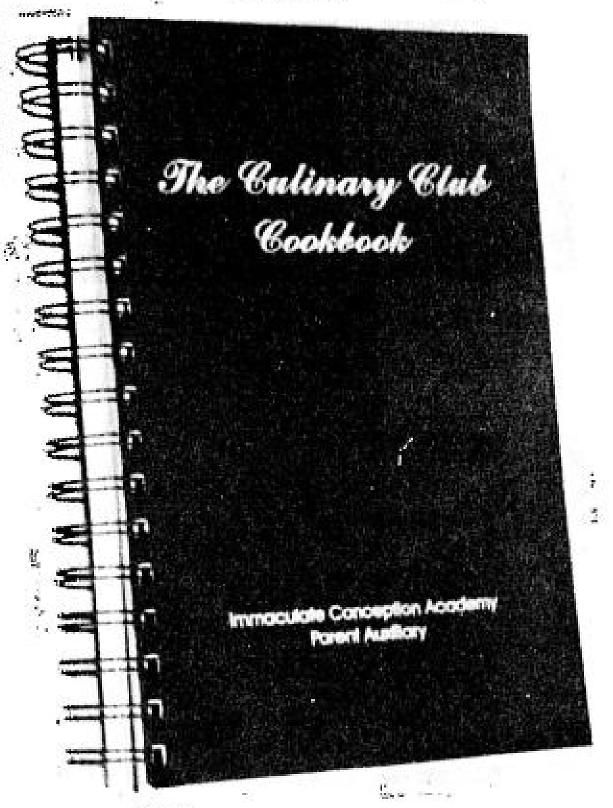
Text us your feedback: inquirer life name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

My kind of cookbook

COOKBOOKS are a tricky subject and I am often asked for my recommendations. There are now so many that they will probably start selling for a dime a dozen. Some have the prettiest pictures you can almost frame them and hang in your walls.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras



THE COOKBOOK produced by the ICA Parent Auxiliary Council is a must-have for every cooking aficionado, even us, professional cooks.

What should a cookbook do and how do you choose a good one? The pictures help but many books I would categorize as mere "inspirational/reference material."

For me a good cookbook is one that is written with utmost simplicity. If it contains heirloom and comfort food recipes and tips, then it is worth keeping. Like any other book, a cookbook should not be judged by its cover.

Marnie Ong and the ladies of the ICA (Immaculate Conception Academy) Parent Auxiliary Council formed a culinary club. The club meets for cooking lessons conducted by culinary professionals and other homemakers. I was invited a couple of times to take part in this activity. Many members were my students for many years and, believe me, they are, on their own right, no mean cooks themselves.

From this regular activity, a cookbook was born, a compilation of over 200 recipes from all over the world, each recipe drawing inspiration from a number of sources. Many are contributions from homemakers who have revised well-kept family secrets. The rest were contributed by people in the industry—Chefs Mauro Arjona, Gene Gonzales, George Lizares, not to forget me, and many others.

As I browsed through the book, I saw many recipes of interest, many of them frequently requested by readers such as Food for the Gods, Chocolate Crinkles, Paella, Traditional Birthday *Misua*, Pan-Fried Goose Liver, *Laing*, *Pandan* Chicken, *Salpicao,* French Onion Soup, and my Roast Stuffed Turkey.

If you ask me, this is a must-have book for every cooking aficionado, even us, professional cooks!

Proceeds from sale of the cookbook will go to the Grant-in-Aid Program of ICA that assists deserving students and children of teachers and employees of the school, who need financial aid (Kathlyn Ong, 0917-8988833).

The season of Lent is again upon us. I don't really know if that no-meat restriction on Fridays is still in effect. I personally think it's harder to be and do good than not eat meat, especially if you're eating *Bacalao* or Sea Bass. Marites Ingles (0917-5267249) is offering whole Chilean Sea Bass for a song—her Lenten Special at P800 a kilo. Fish range in size from 600 grams to two kilos.

Brownie-ing without oven

I'm Anne, a student of SLU (St. Louis University) Baguio. I just want to ask for a recipe for making brownies without using an oven.

Wow, how hard *naman*! My dear, I am not God! Make French toast *na lang*! Here it is, one of my favorite recipes, stuffed with apples or bananas and using croissant instead of regular loaf bread, though loaf bread may also be used.

Diego's French Toast

Batter:
3 large eggs
¼ c milk
1/8 c cream
½ tsp vanilla extract
A pinch of ground cinnamon
Stuffing:
1/3 c sugar
3 tbsp butter
4 bananas or 1 apple, sliced
½ c pure maple syrup
A pinch of cinnamon
3 tbsp butter, for frying
4 large croissants, halved lengthwise
Confectioner's sugar, for dusting
Ground cinnamon, for dusting
Maple syrup
Cooked bacon, ham or fresh fruits (strawberries, etc.) as accompaniment

· Combine batter ingredients, mix well.
· Combine stuffing ingredients in a saucepan and cook fruits until soft.
· Put sandwich filling between croissant halves.
· Melt butter in a pan.
· Dip croissant in batter, fry bread until golden.
· Dust with powdered sugar and cinnamon.
· Serve with maple syrup and bacon, ham or fruit on the side.

Family favorite

Please give me a recipe for chili crabs. I love them and so do my kids but we can't afford to keep (going to) restaurants (for them).

ALDY

Here is a recipe from one of my mentors in Nonya and Singaporean cuisine, Violet Oon. When we did ours, we used lobsters. Delicious! Adjust sugar and chilies according to your taste.

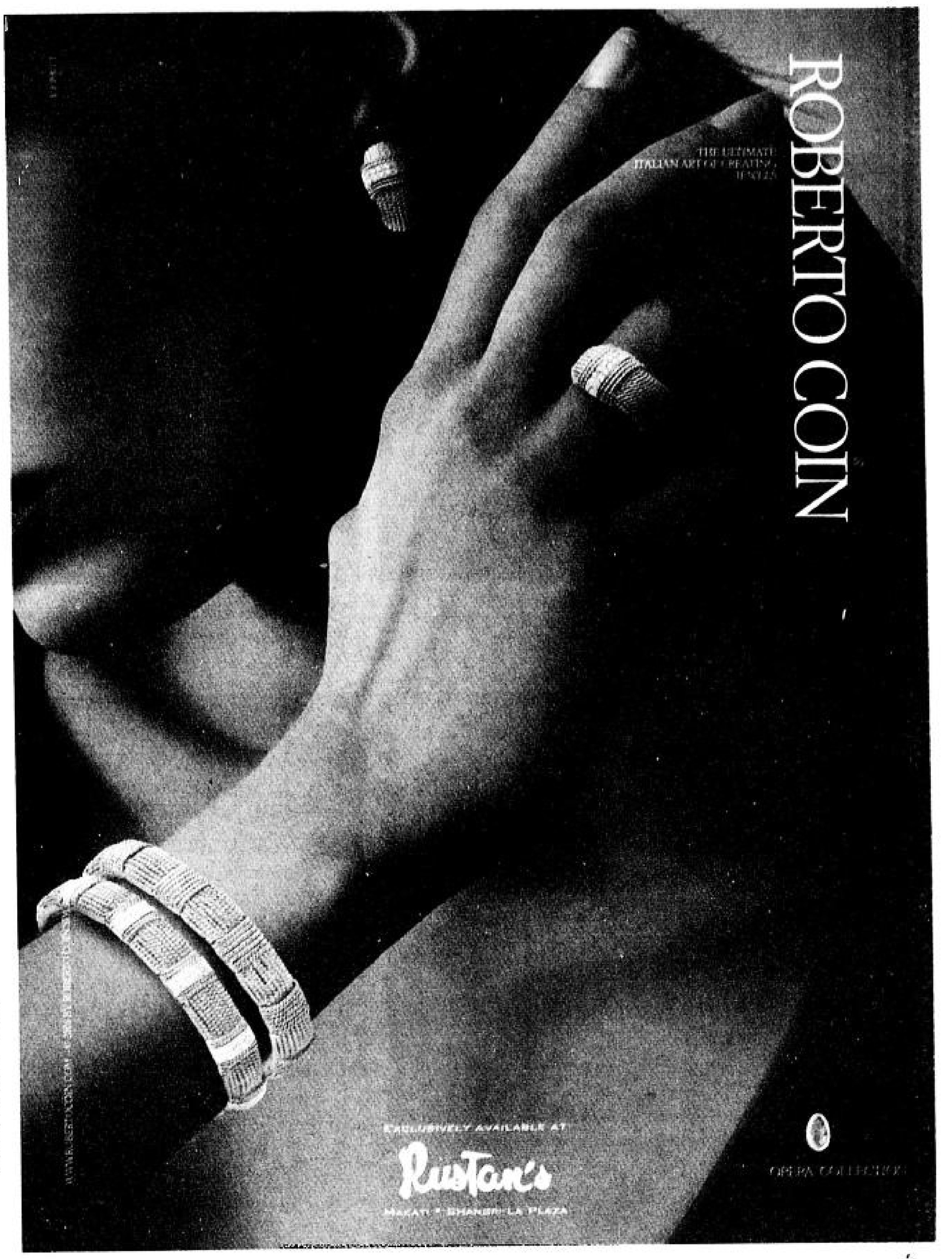
½ k crabs (I like *bakla*; Violex in Farmer's sells great *baklas*—washed, claws cracked)
5 cloves garlic, though I use ½ cup
6 red chilies, not *labuyo* but the long, red Thai or Padi chilies (Lolita's and Zeny's, Farmer's)
2 stalks spring onions, cut into 2-inch lengths
1 coriander plant, cut into 2-inch lengths
3 tbsp vegetable oil
Sauce:
1 c water
3 tbsp tomato ketchup (I use 4)
1 tsp pounded brown or yellow salted soya bean (*taucheo*, available at Lolita's, Farmer's)
1 ½ tsp cornstarch
¼ tsp dark soy sauce
1 ½ tbsp sugar, to taste
salt, to taste
½ tsp vinegar, preferably rice vinegar or lime juice

· Pound garlic & chilies
· Mix all sauce ingredients except vinegar or lime juice
· Heat wok, add oil. When hot, add pounded garlic and chilies
· Add crab and stir-fry until crabs change color.
· Add sauce and let simmer for 5-7 minutes
· Add vinegar.
· Season to taste
· Add green onions and coriander.

Spanish culinary terms, Part 3

Degustacion - tasting
Desayuno - breakfast
Dulce - sweet
Empanada - savory pastry from Galicia
Ensalada - salad
Ensaimada - cake from Mallorca
Entradas - starters

For comments or suggestions, text 0917-8399888.



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Max's Hearty Chicken Meal for four
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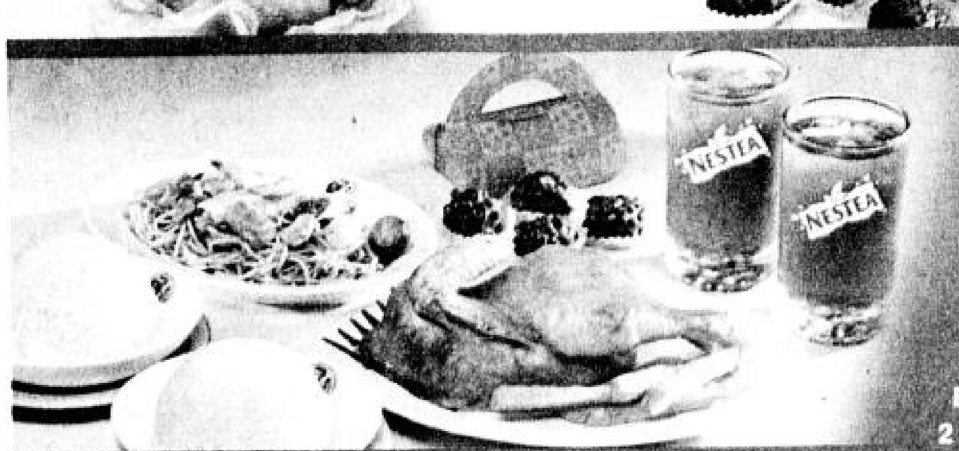
1/2 Fried Chicken, 2 Lumpiang Shanghai, regular Pancit Canton, 4 rice, 4 NESTEA, 8 pcs. Irish Truffles.



Max's Hearty Chicken Meal for two
₱ 299
1/2 Fried Chicken (or 4 pcs. Family Basket Chicken), small Pancit Canton, 2 rice, 2 NESTEA, 4 pcs. Irish Truffles.

May ka-partner ka man o wala, di dapat kang magmukmok ngayong Valentine's, dahil may **Max's Hearty Chicken Meals**. Complete, affordable set meals na may kasamang tamis ng Irish Truffles for dessert. Good para sa isa o dalawang partners, tiyak ma-iinlove kayo sa sarap. Kaya kung wala ka pang date, maghanap na ng kaparis para ma-enjoy mo na ang Max's Hearty Meals!

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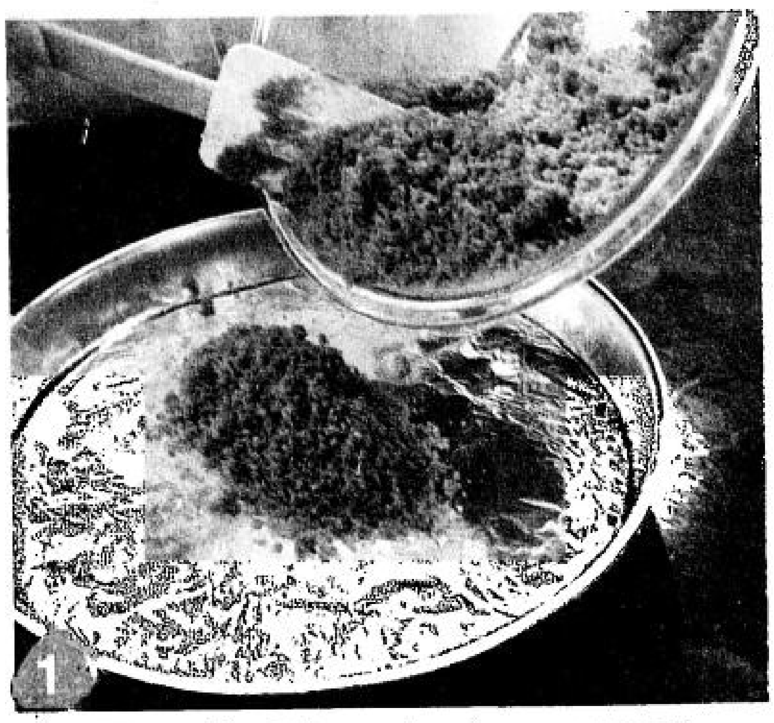
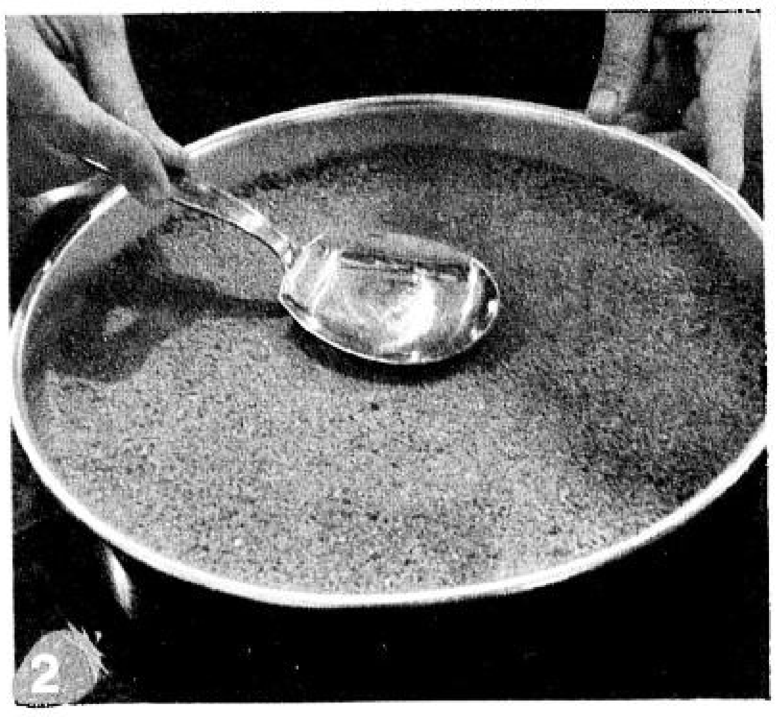
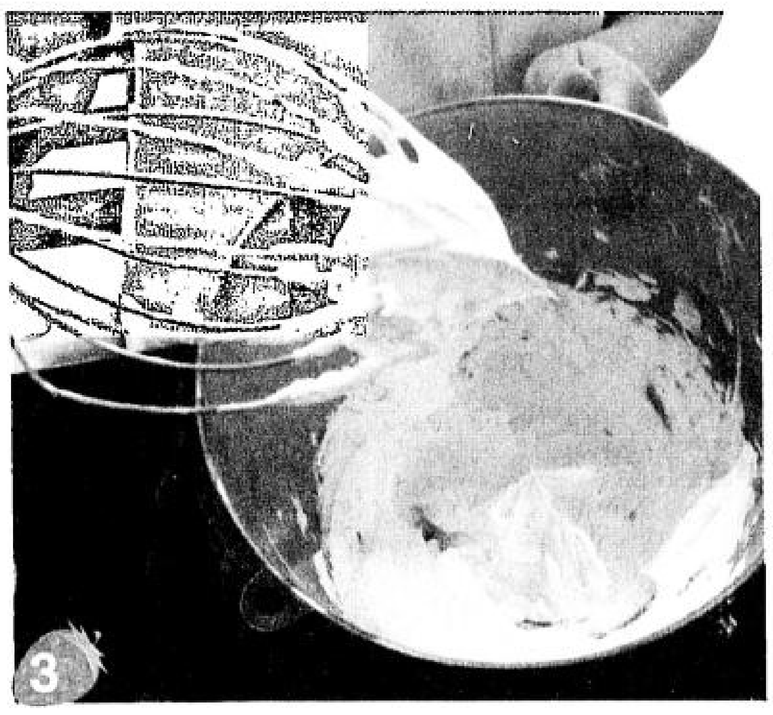
Max's RESTAURANT



TO MAKE crust, place Graham crackers, cinnamon, sugar and margarine in a bowl. Mix well. Transfer crumb mixture to a 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom pan.

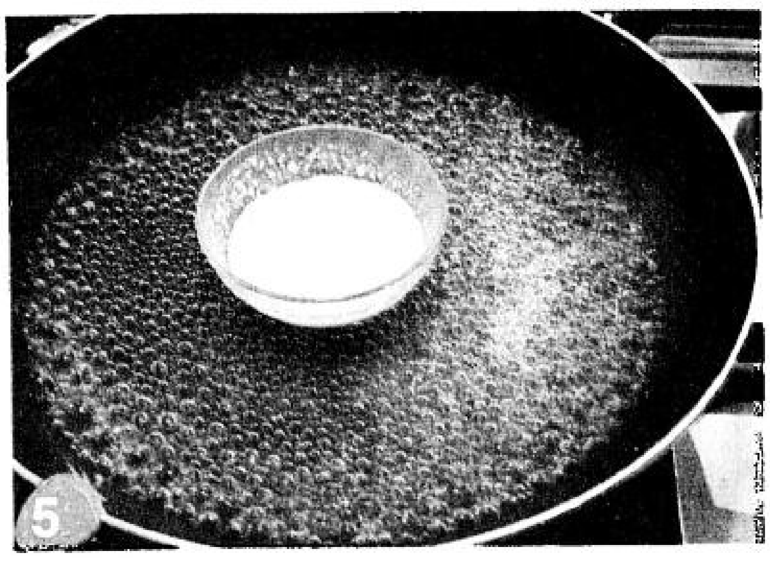


PRESS crust mixture evenly over bottom and up sides of the tart pan. Chill for 30 minutes.

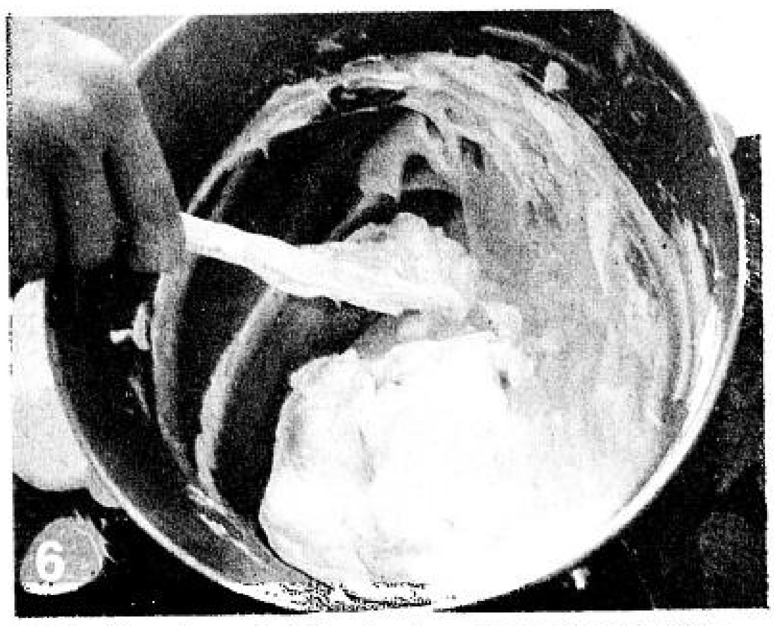


FOR the filling, whip all-purpose cream until stiff. Set aside.

BEAT strawberry cream cheese and sugar until light and fluffy.



MEANWHILE, dissolve unflavored gelatin in milk over low fire and add to cream cheese mixture.



FOLD whipped cream into the strawberry cream cheese mixture.

Love in Strawberry Fields

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

STEP BY STEP

IF YOU are planning a home-cooked dinner to mark Valentine's Day, make things easy for yourself so you can have the energy and time to enjoy being with your loved one.

A delicious home-cooked dinner need not involve hours of hard work. You can ease the workload with this fuss-free Valentine's Day dessert. Strawberry Fields Cheesecake is a no-bake cheesecake using not fresh strawberries but store-bought strawberry-flavored gelatin.

"The gelatin cut into small pieces has a good texture in your mouth. It is refreshing and will melt in your mouth," says Carrie Madrid, product application specialist of San Miguel Pure Foods. "Besides, gelatin, like Jellyace, is readily available even at your neighborhood sari-sari store." And cheesecake is one classic dessert people never tire of.

Although this no-bake version is simpler and does not take a lot of time to make, it is just as rich, dense, creamy and dreamy as the more complicated versions. It's also ideal for those who do not have ovens at home.

For Strawberry Fields Cheesecake, instead of regular cream cheese, the Magnolia strawberry cream cheese spread is used.

Madrid suggests arranging the cheesecake on a pretty platter or tiered cake stand. It should be served in small portions, as it is a very rich dessert.

Ingredients

For crust:

1 ¼ c Graham cracker crumbs
¼ tsp cinnamon powder (optional)
2 tbsp sugar
1/3 c Magnolia Baker's Best Margarine, melted

For filling:

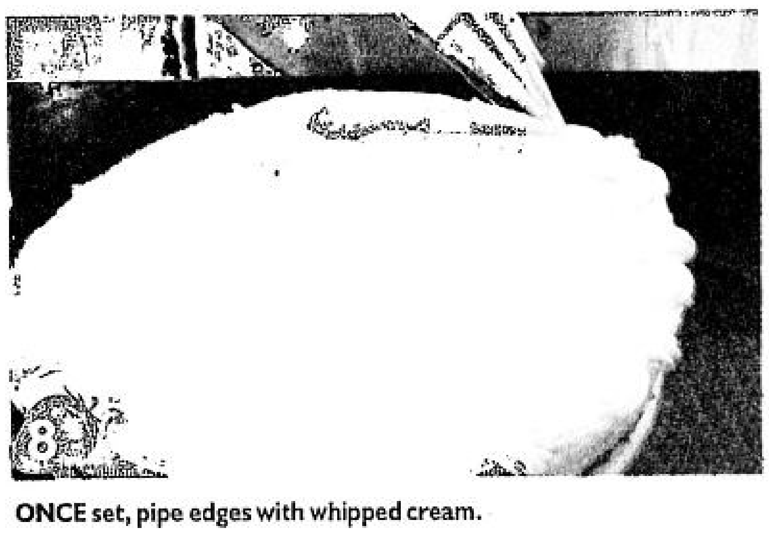
1 bottle Magnolia Strawberry Cream Cheese Spread
¼ c sugar
1 tbsp unflavored gelatin, dissolved in 3 tbsp Magnolia Fresh Milk
1 c all-purpose cream, chilled

For topping:

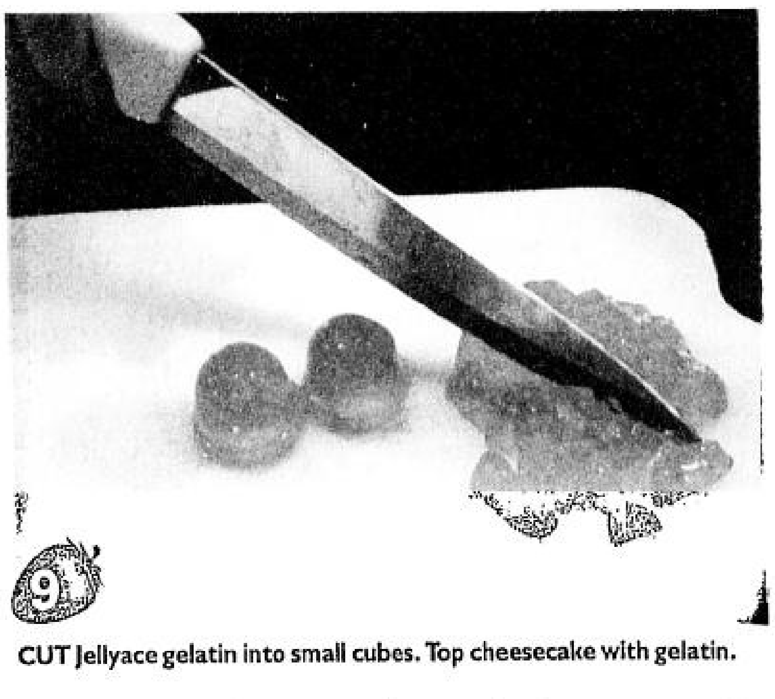
Strawberry-flavored Jellyace
Whipped Cream

For suggestions, e-mail vbaga@inquirer.com.ph.

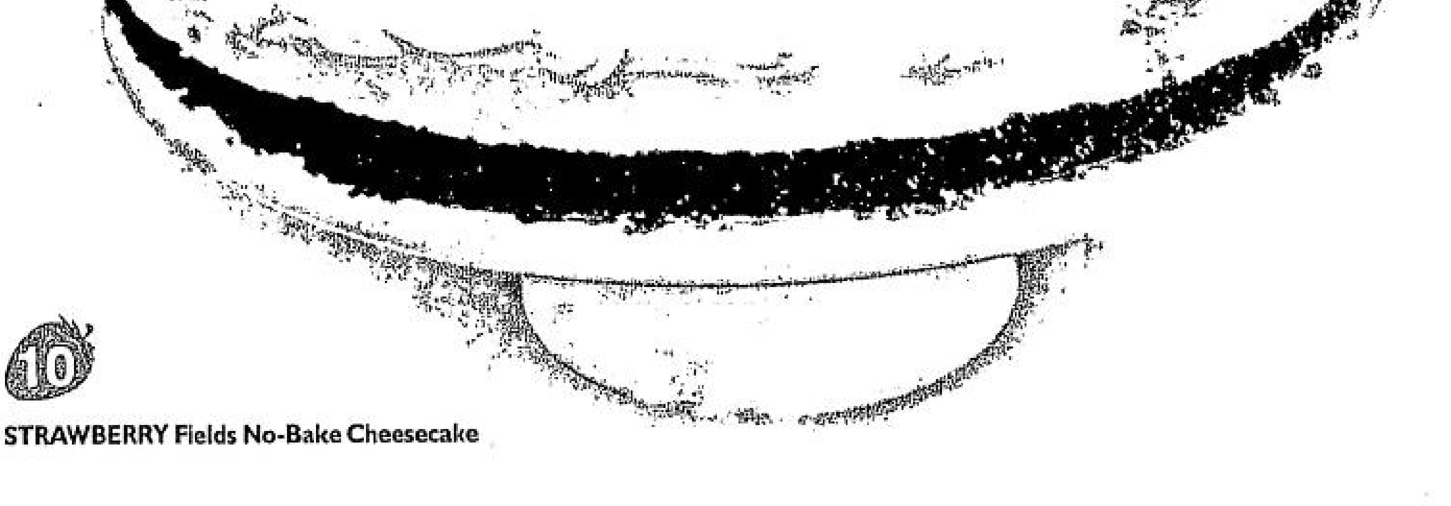
POUR into crumb-lined pan, even out and chill for at least three hours.



ONCE set, pipe edges with whipped cream.



CUT Jellyace gelatin into small cubes. Top cheesecake with gelatin.



STRAWBERRY Fields No-Bake Cheesecake

Perfect date awaits 1,000 couples

NESTLE Coffee-Mate gives couples in love a chance to experience a rare kind of Valentine treat.

About 1,000 couples will be treated to what could be their most romantic date in Coffee-Mate's "Perfect Mate, Perfect Date" dinner party at 6 p.m., Feb. 12, at SM Megamall B Open Parking C, Mandaluyong City.

The event will also bring together the largest number of dating couples in one venue at the same time.

Participating couples will have a complimentary sit-down dinner. Entertainment will be provided by popular artists. Aurelio catering will provide the food and drinks for the candlelit dinner. After-dinner coffee will be served in a ceremonial manner by Coffee-Mate.

Featured performers are Zsa Zsa Padilla, Jaya, M.Y.M.P., Barbie's Cradle, Mulatto and the Pinoy Pop Superstar finalists.

The evening will also have raffle draws and other special surprises for the dating couples.

"Nestle Philippines celebrates the love month through Coffee-Mate, which is acknowledged by more coffee drinkers today as the perfect mate for their coffee. This is all about celebrating with our loved one by giving him or her a perfect date," says Leslie Go-Alcantara, brand manager of Nestle Philippines.

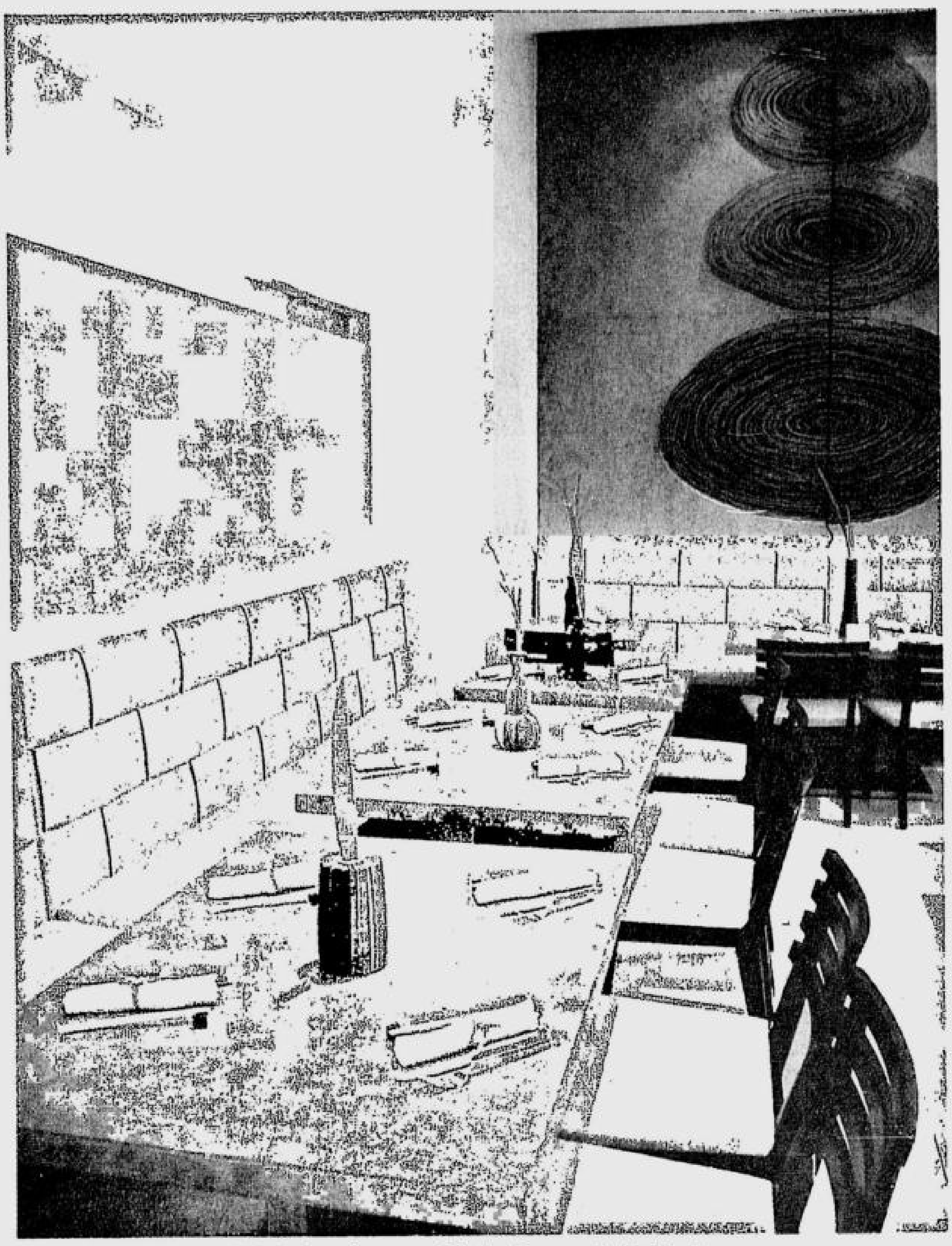
The evening will have a Love Wish portion, wherein couples will release red and white balloons as they make their wishes. Though it may sound corny to others, they will also simultaneously shout the words "I Love You" loud enough for everyone to hear to show their affection for their date.

Husband-and-wife Vince and Shaan Hizon, the evening's hosts, will lead the crowd.

Well, those who have followed the series of Coffee-Mate television commercials featuring Montaña basketball star Alex Compton and model Tessa Nieto will see the next installment of the series that will be launched during the event.

Winners of the "Text What's Next" promo will be announced. The top prize is an Asian Cruise. The promo asked TV viewers what happens next in the TV "relationship" of Compton and Nieto.

"Perfect Mate, Perfect Date" will be opened to walk-in couples aged 18 years and above. Each has to have a box top of Coffee-Mate to register. Registration starts at 10 a.m. and the opening ceremonies will be at 6 pm. Only the first 1,000 couples will be accepted.



M IS MORE than just a café. It is also a showcase of design. Paper art by Tes Pasola.

M GIVES a modern twist to Asian dishes. Crème Brûlée Trio

PRAWNS flavored with Lemongrass in Green Mango Salad Spiced with Red Curry, one of M's signature dishes

Zone of food and art

MUSEUM Café, located in the heart of Makati, is both an artistic and culinary showpiece.

Anabella Wisniewski of Raintree Partners, the development and management company behind Discovery Suites in Ortigas Center, Discovery Country Suites in Tagaytay, New York Cafés and Foodpark at the Enterprise, Food and Art Gallery at the GT Tower, and Food Odysseys at LKG Tower, collaborated with premier designer Budji Layug and top architect Royal Pineda to create a coffee shop-cum-restaurant that lets one experience an amalgam of excellent food and exquisite design.

M Cafe features an outdoor café, an indoor studio bistro and an "artist's loft" with exhibition walls, cozy reading alcoves and an eclectic assortment of art pieces.

"It's more than just a café. It's a venue where people can exchange ideas and philosophies, and get inspired while meeting. It is a showcase of design," says Wisniewski.

Among the artists that have contributed their works to M are Movement 8, a prestigious group of furniture designers; Impy Pilapil with her sculpture pieces, Don Jaime Zobel with his photography, Tess Pasola with her paper art and different floral masters for unique flower arrangements.

Even the staff uniforms are works of art created by veteran designer Renee Salud.

M also showcases superb modern Asian dishes, whipped up by Chef Sau del Rosario who has gained international renown in Europe and Asia for his work in the kitchen.

Among his signature dishes are the Yuzu Lime Marinated Gindara, Grilled Coconut Ginger Tiger Prawns, Pan-seared Baby Lapu-Lapu, Prawns in Green Mango Salad, Chicken Adobo Foie Gras and Jackfruit Tempura.

The sweet-toothed can never go wrong with the Pastillas Cheesecake, the Jackfruit Sans Rival and the Crème Brulee Trio.

For lovers, M features Fresh Aklan Oysters in orange flower dressing, Baked Red Apple and Roasted Foie Gras Tart, Lavender Smoked Salmon and Pan Seared Pacific Scallops with Oriental Mushroom and Squash Tempura, Asian Seafood Bouillabaise with caper Flower, Zucchini Floss and Jasmine Rice on Feb. 12-14.

Located at the ground floor of the Ayala Museum's glass wing, M opens daily at 6:30 a.m. and offers breakfast, lunch, Asian high tea and dinner service until 12 midnight. Sunday brunch is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Patio tables are available for seasonal dining al fresco, along with a full bar offering coffees, teas, signature cocktails and an extensive list of wines. Call 7573000.

PAN-Seared Baby Lapu-Lapu

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Take a shot at love!
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PRIMA

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Promo period is from February 7 to 28, 2005.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0334, Series of 2005

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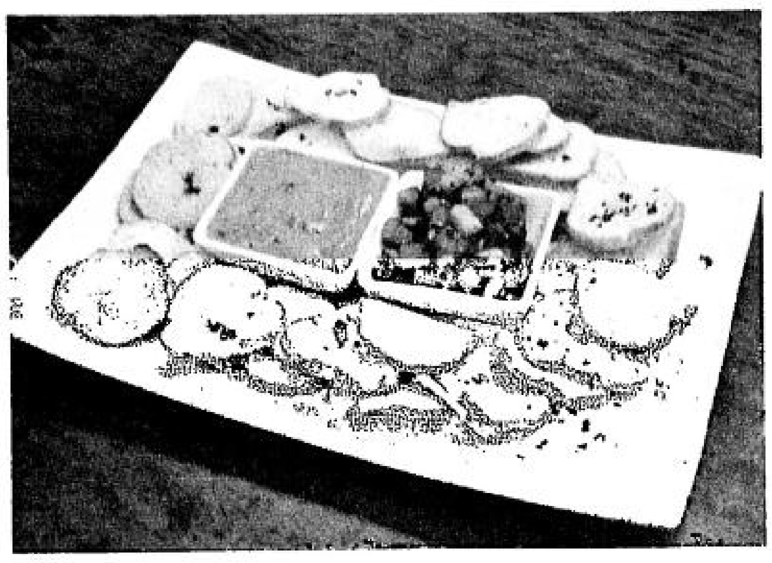
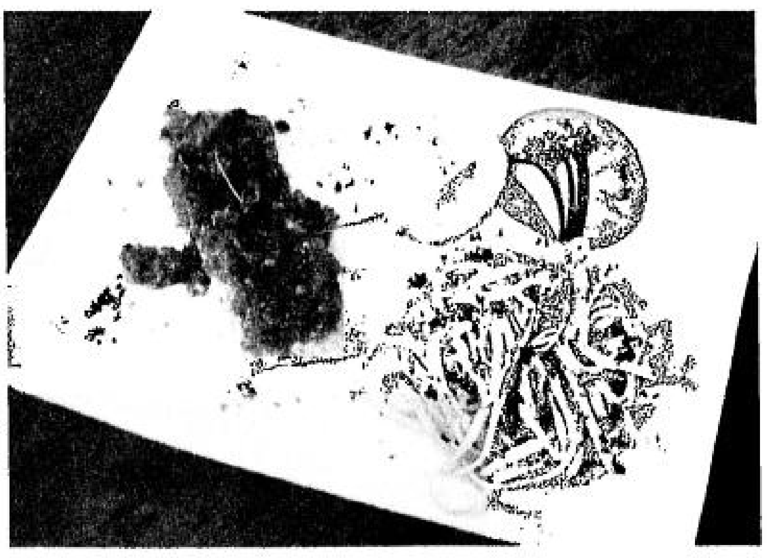


QUESO-GAMBAS Crostata

BEEF Roll Ups



GROUPER with Lemon Grass, served with pasta

Fine dining goes to the mall

Carafe's owners believe that just because you're in a shopping center doesn't mean you only have to eat at the food court

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

IF you happen to be at Shangri-La Plaza Mall and suddenly find that your tummy is asking to be filled, why not try Carafe (pronounced Karaf) at the fourth level, right across Rustan's Department Store?

The restaurant has an interesting array of appetizers, soup and salad, pasta, meat dishes and desserts, not to mention an extensive list of coffee and wines.

"Our food is a selection of Eastern and Western dishes. It's a mix of French, Italian and Filipino specialties, which may sound familiar but are given a different twist. But it's not fusion cuisine. It's something different, and we simply call it creative global cuisine," says Mia Florencio, one of the owner-partners of Carafe, French for "wine decanter."

Only a month-and-a-half-old, Carafe is a place for casual fine dining in the heart of a mall. It offers food that is fresh and interesting, yet very simple.

The place is a joint project of good friends Paolo Espiritu, JC Cruz, Robert Castañeda, and siblings Raffy, Mia and Tomy Florencio, who are well-known in the jewelry and watch business.

As the restaurant's managing partner, Mia Florencio handles the daily operations and other administrative work, while Espiritu takes care of the kitchen.

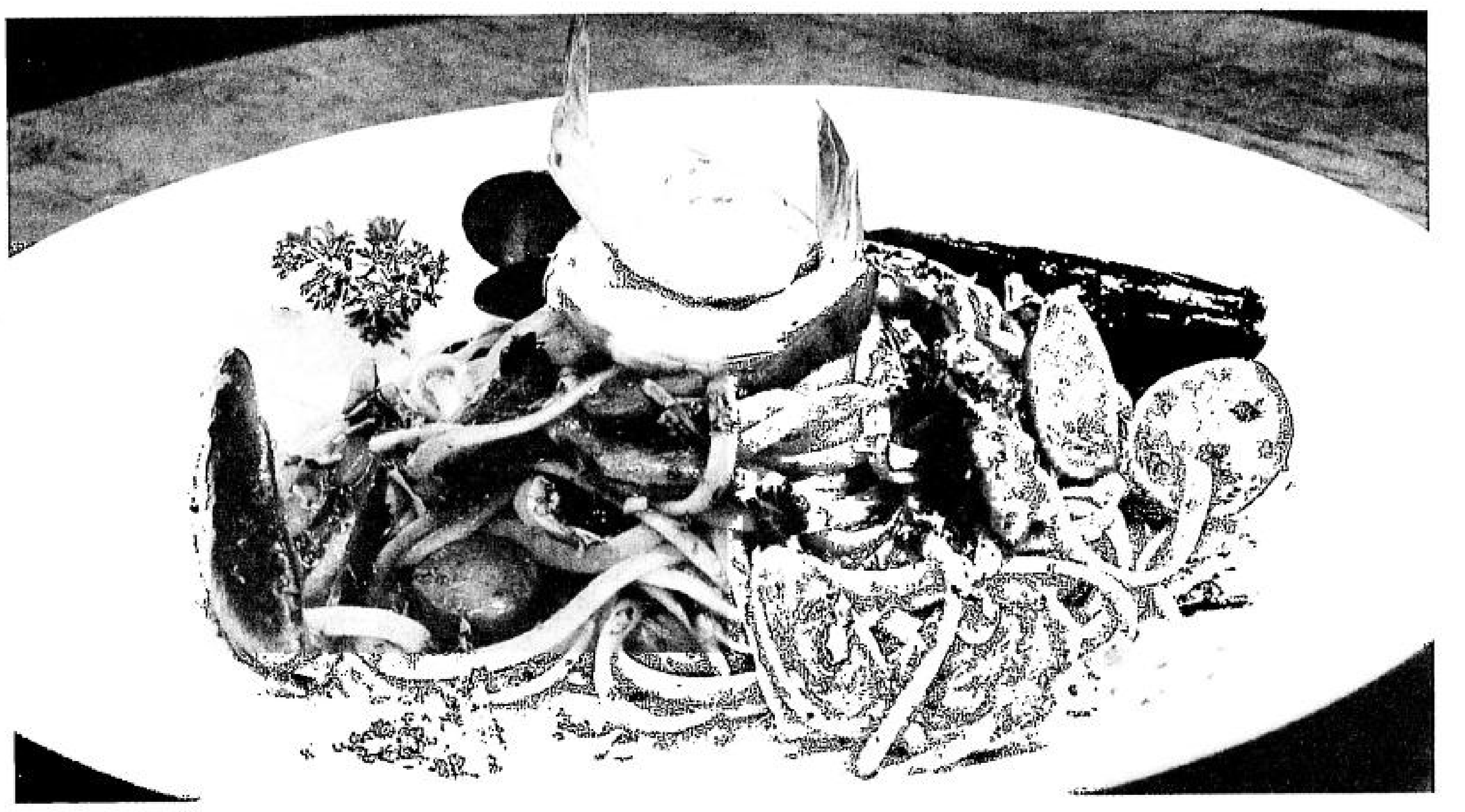
Opened the day after Christmas, you'll find Carafe packed with customers, young and old alike, most afternoons. Harried shoppers, and even those who simply want to hang out and kill time in the mall, have lunch, afternoon snacks or dinner here.

"On weekends, families, especially those who go to the supermarket, packed our place," Florencio says.

Carafe is an elegant and cozy place where one can savor delicious meals even in a mall setting. "Not just because you're in a mall, you have to (settle for) aluminum chairs and plastic tables (and) so-so dishes. Shangri-La is a classy mall. Here (at Carafe), you can have good food, good wine and perfect ambience after a day of shopping," says Florencio.

She adds executives with business meetings in a mall would rather choose a quieter place than the busy food court.

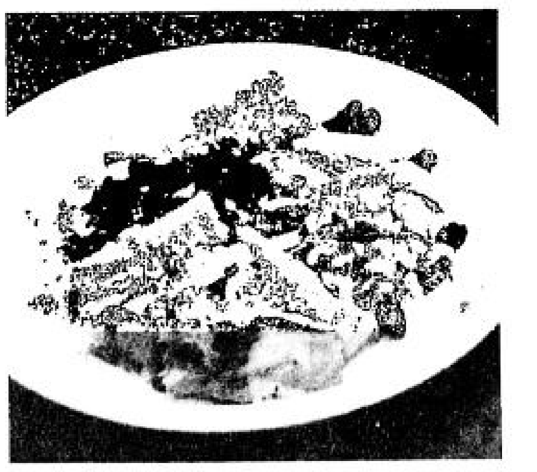
At Carafe, tables and chairs in dark wood are set at comfortable distances from each other. The place has stylized stained glass around the kitchen area. The minimalist arrangement is definitely conducive to a relaxing meal.



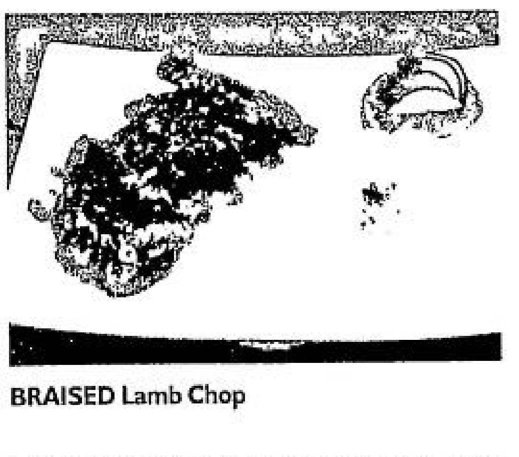
PASTA Española

COCO-BICO

ADOBO à la Carafe



GARDEN Fruit Salad



BRAISED Lamb Chop

Signature dishes

At Carafe, you get Beef Roll Ups (P170) that consist of beef patties and assorted greens, wrapped in tortilla and blended with wasabi-mayo dressing. The good old chicken *adobo*, christened Adobo à la Carafe (P165), is less greasy and cooked with basil and sun-dried tomatoes.

Carafe's Braised Lamb Chop (P350) is served with Espiritu's special thick chili-garlic sauce. The lamb is without the smell and aftertaste that make the meat a no-no for some people.

The popular paella has been transformed into a delicious pasta concoction, Pasta Española (P220). Instead of Arborio rice, it uses linguini with tomato sauce, shellfish, chicken and *chorizo de bilbao*.

Another interesting item on the menu is the Indonesian- and Thai-inspired Grouper with Lemon Grass (P265), steamed grouper fillet cooked in a little olive oil with tomato coulis and lemon grass.

For dessert there is Coco-Bico (P95), a sweet dark rice cooked in fresh coconut milk and chocolate sauce. Panna Cotta (P110) is vanilla bean panna cotta with light caramel syrup while Chocolate Fondue (P180) is seasonal fruits served with dark chocolate fondue.

As it prepares for its formal opening this month, Carafe is expanding its menu, offering more salads, sandwiches, pasta and meat dishes. Even its list of beverages that includes fresh fruit juices, soda, coffee (Lavazza, Italy's No. 1 coffee) and wine will also be expanded.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph.

MANAGING partner Mia Florencio handles the daily operations of Carafe.

MORE places to wine and dine your beloved /E3-4

BULALO

BALOT ala Pobre

ADOBO Camaru

Buffet of exotic and aphrodisiac treats

CAN FOOD make you more in love? This Valentine's Day, Cabalen is giving lovers this special treat.

The premier eat-all-you-can, eat-all-you-want Filipino specialty restaurant is offering some of the country's reputed aphrodisiac and other exotic dishes on its buffet table.

For the day of lovers, among Cabelen's special offerings are *Balot ala Pobre, Adobong Camaru, Bulalo with Mais* and *Adobo Guya ng Baka*. Everything on the menu will go well with a tall glass of Love Shake.

After a fully satisfying meal, lovebirds have a choice of yummy *kakanin* including Cabalen's special Valentine feature, the heart-shaped gelatin. Of course, they can mix themselves a refreshing *halo-halo* using only the finest home-made native ingredients.

To celebrate the season of love, Cabalen is giving away Rose Chocolates to women customers on Feb. 14 for a minimum purchase of P600.

Recognized as the home of hearty Filipino dishes, couples who will dine at Cabalen on Valentine's Day can enjoy the sumptuous exotic buffet of over 50 dishes for only P249 at Cabalen West Avenue, Quezon City; Cabalen SM City, North Edsa; Cabalen SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City; Cabalen Robinson's, Ermita, Manila; Cabalen Glorietta 3, Makati City; Cabalen SM Manila; Cabalen Robinson's Pampanga; Cabalen Sta. Lucia East Grandmall; and Cabalen Harrison Plaza Village Square.

Cabalen also caters for all occasions. Call 9135522. Visit Cabalen's website at www.cabalenrestaurant.com or call Cabalen's head office at 9111584.

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CEBU Ramil 231-3254
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LEGASPI VILL. Lani 893-8935
MALATE Daisy 536-0619
MEGAMALL Sheila/Jenny 631-3869
PASAY RD Cher/Maan 887-1335
Pasay Rd cellphone 09178515920
PASIG Fiona/Muffet 681-5333
SM NORTH Mitch 929-5429
SUBIC Beth 252-6514
TRAFALGAR Ice 814-0138
SKIN CENTER HOTLINES: ALABANG 7750586/09183912510 BINONDO 2420728/09178224399 CALOOCAN 3657653 GREENHILLS 7261526/09182112732 MALATE 5259891/09213173415 MEGAMALL 6377543/09162479753 PASAY RD. 8873530/09165320785 PASIG 6473814/09275341314

glassware linen decor
souvenir heart pets
Valentine mugs say it all
plump love pillows to hug
Happy Valentine
resin teddies declare their love
flowers forever rose bouquets
hearty greetings on a stick
fun pillows with heart-felt messages
SM HomeWorld
QUIAPO • HOME CENTER MAKATI • CUBAO • HARRISON • NORTH EDSA
STA. MESA • ORTIGAS • LAS PIÑAS • BACOOR • FAIRVIEW • MANILA
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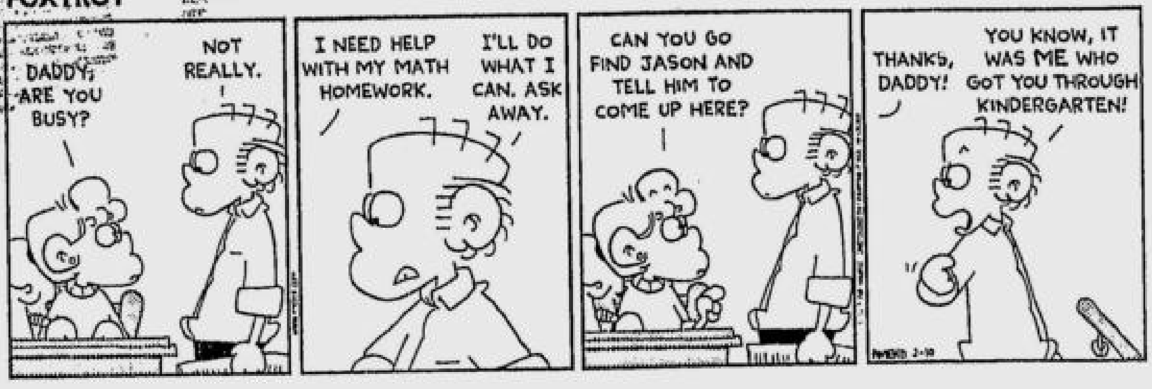
LUCENA • BAGUIO • MARILAO • DASMARIÑAS • BATANGAS • DELGADO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ComicRelief
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2005

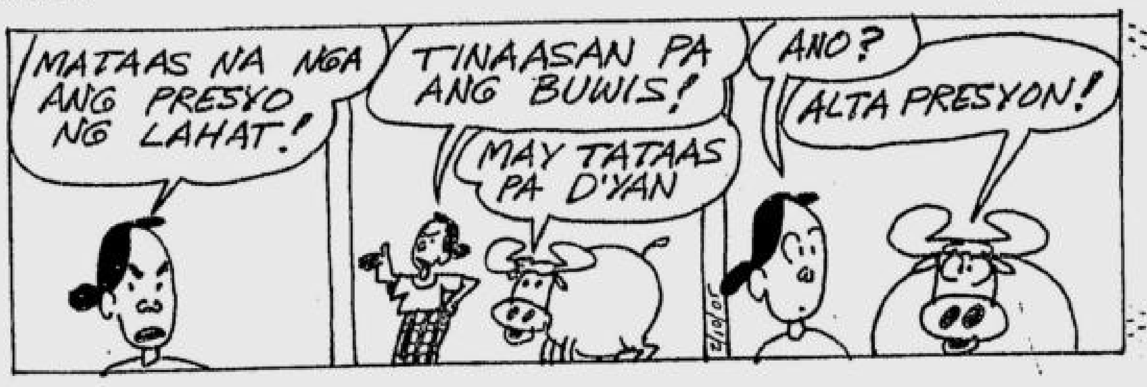
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


DADDY, ARE YOU BUSY?
NOT REALLY.
I NEED HELP WITH MY MATH HOMEWORK.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN. ASK AWAY.
CAN YOU GO FIND JASON AND TELL HIM TO COME UP HERE?
THANKS, DADDY!
YOU KNOW, IT WAS ME WHO GOT YOU THROUGH KINDERGARTEN!
AMEND 2-10

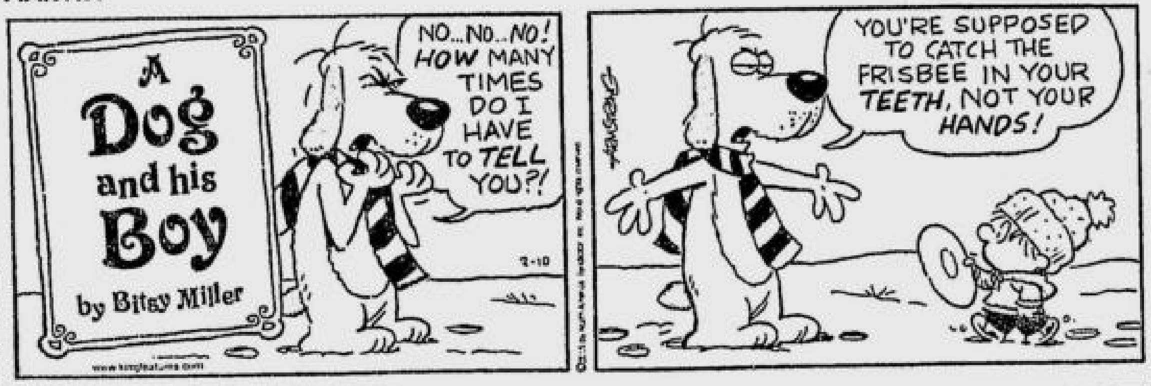
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MATAAS NA NGA ANG PRESYO NG LAHAT!
TINAASAN PA ANG BUWIS!
MAY TATAAS PA D'YAN
ANO?
ALTA PRESYON!
2/10/05

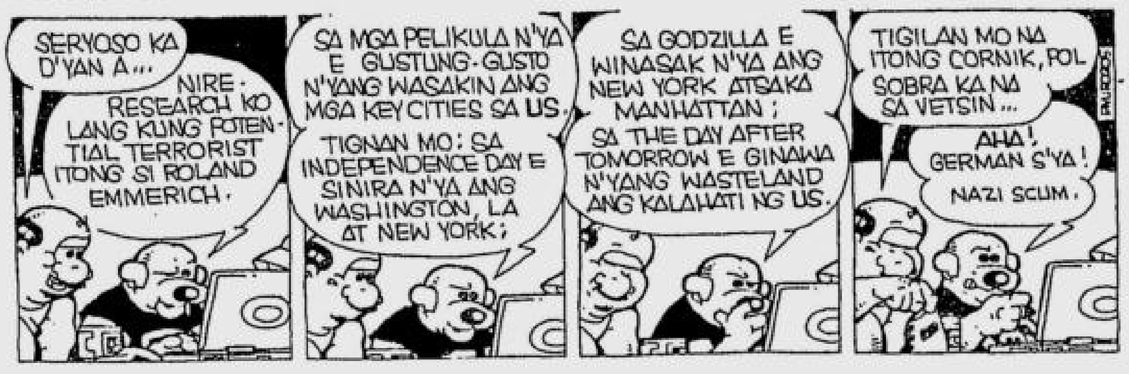
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


A Dog and his Boy
by Bitsy Miller
NO...NO...NO! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?!
2-10
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CATCH THE FRISBEE IN YOUR TEETH, NOT YOUR HANDS!

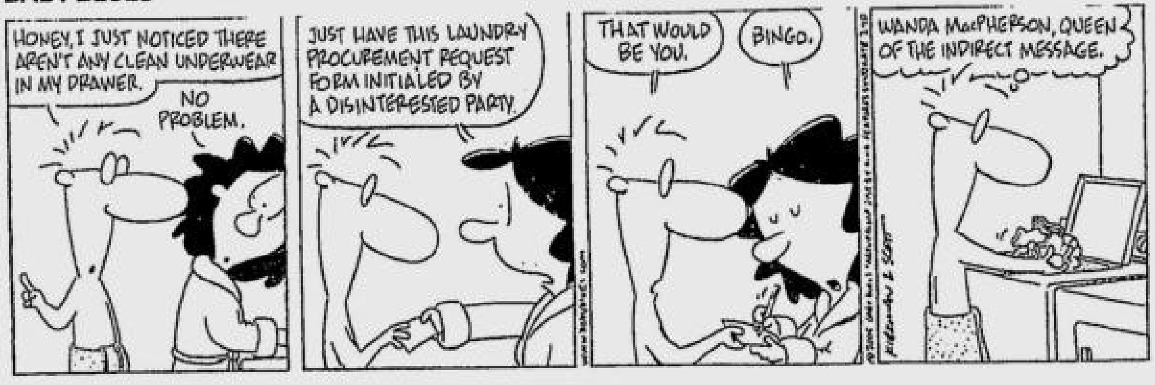
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SERYOSO KA D'YAN A...
NIRE-RESEARCH KO LANG KUNG POTENTIAL TERRORIST ITONG SI ROLAND EMMERICH.
SA MGA PELIKULA N'YA E GUSTUNG-GUSTO N'YANG WASAKIN ANG MGA KEY CITIES SA US.
TIGNAN MO: SA INDEPENDENCE DAY E SINIRA N'YA ANG WASHINGTON, LA AT NEW YORK;
SA GODZILLA E WINASAK N'YA ANG NEW YORK ATSAKA MANHATTAN;
SA THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW E GINAWA N'YANG WASTELAND ANG KALAHATI NG US.
TIGILAN MO NA ITONG CORNIK, POL SOBRA KA NA SA VETSIN...
AHA! GERMAN S'YA!
NAZI SCUM.

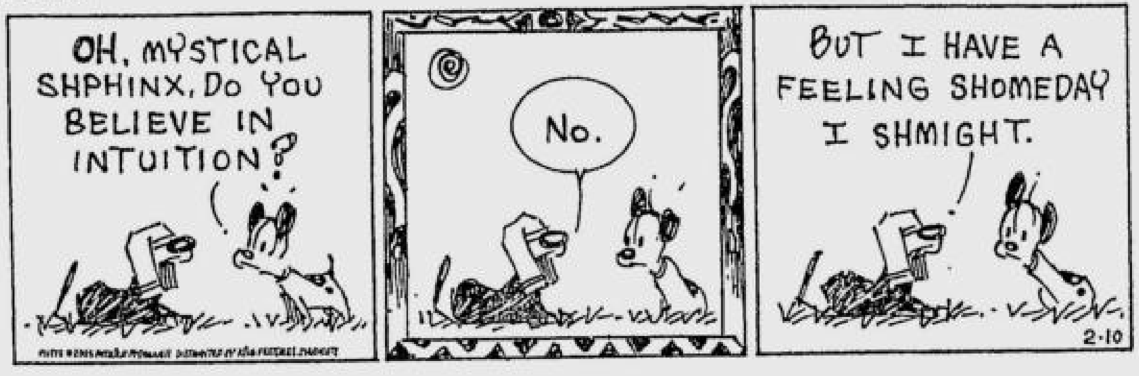
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HONEY, I JUST NOTICED THERE AREN'T ANY CLEAN UNDERWEAR IN MY DRAWER.
NO PROBLEM.
JUST HAVE THIS LAUNDRY PROCUREMENT REQUEST FORM INITIALED BY A DISINTERESTED PARTY.
THAT WOULD BE YOU.
BINGO.
WANDA MacPHERSON, QUEEN OF THE INDIRECT MESSAGE.

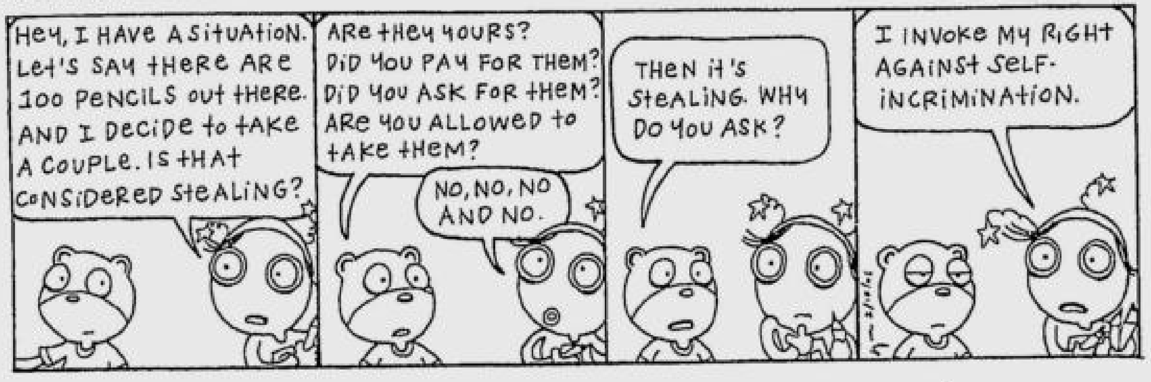
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, MYSTICAL SHPHINX, Do YOU BELIEVE IN INTUITION?
No.
BUT I HAVE A FEELING SHOMEDAY I SHMIGHT.
2-10

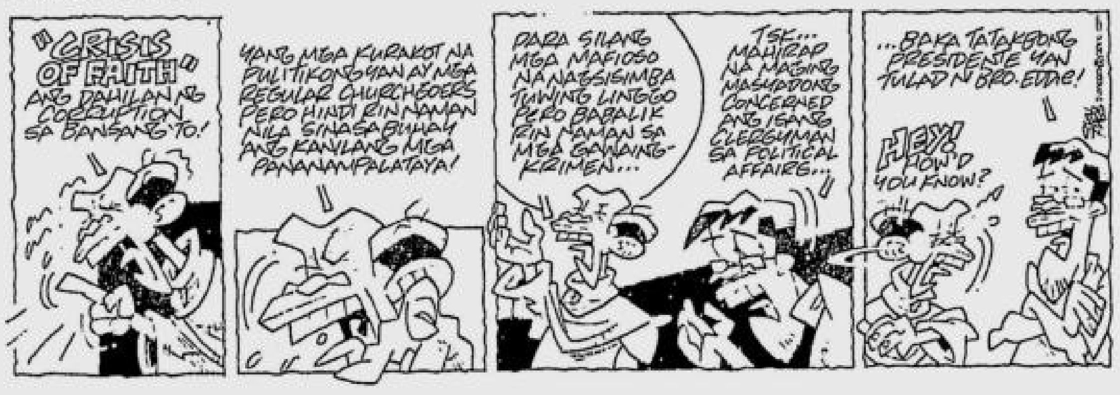
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, I HAVE A SituAtioN. Let's SAY tHeRe ARe 100 PeNCILS out tHeRe. AND I DeCiDe to tAKe A CouPLe. IS tHAt CoNSiDeReD SteALiNG?
ARe tHey YouRS? DiD You PAY FoR tHeM? DiD You ASK FoR tHeM? ARe You ALLoWeD to tAKe tHeM?
No, No, No AND No.
THeN it's SteALiNG. WHY Do You ASK?
I INVoKe MY RiGHt AGAiNSt SeLF-iNCRiMiNAtioN.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


"CRISIS OF FAITH" ANG DAHILAN NG CORRUPTION SA BANSANG 'TO!
YANG MGA KURAKOT NA PULITIKONG YAN AY MGA REGULAR CHURCHGOERS PERO HINDI RIN NAMAN NILA SINASABUHAY ANG KANILANG MGA PANANAMPALATAYA!
PARA SILANG MGA MAFIOSO NA NAGSISIMBA TUWING LINGGO PERO BABALIK RIN NAMAN SA MGA GAWAING-KRIMEN...
TSK... MAHIRAP NA MAGING MASYADONG CONCERNED ANG ISANG CLERGYMAN SA POLITICAL AFFAIRS...
...BAKA TATAKBONG PRESIDENTE YAN TULAD NI BRO. EDDIE!
HEY! HOW'D YOU KNOW?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're confident and ambitious. You want to achieve something important. You want to do things your own way, because you're comfortable with yourself. You know how to stir the feelings of others. You feel responsible to clients, customers or your audience. The year ahead is full of exciting, new beginnings. It's a whole new path.

Birthdate of: Leontyne Price, soprano; Lance Berkman, baseball player; George Stephanopoulos,analyst

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a wonderful day to talk to partners, customers and close friends. You'll inspire them to join groups and do great things. Your enthusiasm is contagious!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is the perfect day to talk to your boss. Ask for the Moon. (You might get a little star.) Lady Luck is with you today!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is an excellent day for financial speculation, especially related to foreign countries, the media and publishing. You might hear good news from afar.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The universe might give you a gift today. Generosity from others will definitely come your way. Keep your pockets open!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's so easy to enjoy the company of others today. Likewise, others want to be in your presence. Witty conversations and good feelings abound. You're happy to be alive!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your ruler, Mercury, is on wonderful terms with moneybags Jupiter today. That means you can boost your income. You can also improve your job in a number of ways! Lucky you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a good day for financial speculation. It's also a lovely day for romance, flirtations, fun times, vacations and creative activities with children. Enjoy yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a great day to do repairs at home. Improvements will make a big difference where you live. Similarly, discussions with family members are upbeat and supportive.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): All your interactions with others are excellent today. Attend conferences and meetings, meet friends for coffee and extend invitations for lunch or dinner. Enjoy the company of others!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a wonderful day to improve your career. It's also a great day to talk bosses and VIPs into promoting your earnings in some way. You shine!

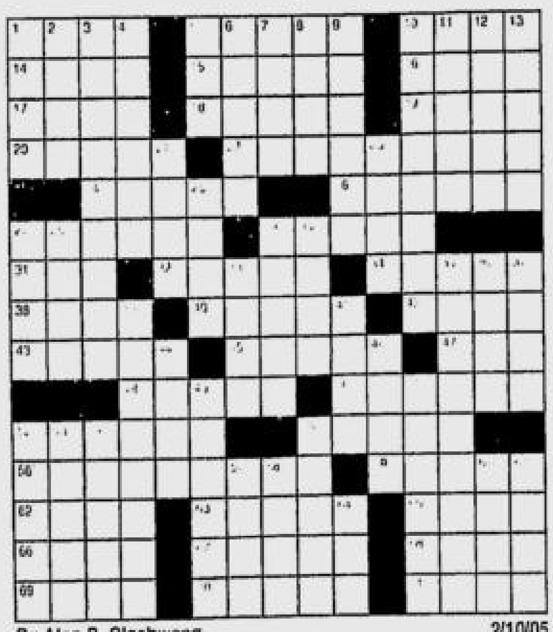
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): They say a great idea can sell itself. Whatever you say today is so positive and so upbeat and so enthusiastic that everyone will go for it. You can't lose.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel spiritual and quiet today. You see how helping others enriches your life. Of course, in turn, this brings generosity your way. It is very apparent to you now that what goes around comes around.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Part of a wineglass
5 Mythical weightlifter
10 Not of the cloth
14 Piece of glass
15 Quenched thirst
16 Borodin's prince
17 Teheran's place
18 Rouen's river
19 Kelly or Tierney
20 Start of G.K. Chesterton quote
22 Part 2 of quote
24 Good grief!
26 Gnaws on
27 Strike out
29 Engages in agronomy
31 Singer DiFranco
32 Zhou of China
34 One of Bolivia s capitals
38 Sardine containers
40 Part 3 of quote
42 Bard
43 Lawn-care tool
45 Pros' foes
47 Born as
48 Climbing vine
50 Spots
52 Shepherds' crooks
55 On any occasion
56 Part 4 of quote
59 End of quote
62 Scottish Gaelic
63 Tilts to one side
65 Conception
66 Sniggler's pursuit
67 Fancy tie
68 Ooze
69 Golf gadgets
70 Former Indian leader
71 Roush and Hall

DOWN
1 Rotate rapidly
2 Poi source
3 Creating cloisonne
4 Household
5 Want __
6 Arduous journeys
7 Reclined
8 Part of A.D.
9 Shish kebab pin
10 Illuminates
11 James and Tommie
12 Region of Asia Minor
13 Aquafresh alternative
21 Archibald of the NBA
23 Waterston and Wanamaker
25 Contradict
27 See socially
28 Arthurian lady
29 Local wildlife
30 That _ hay!
33 Library transaction
35 Finalized
36 Stink
37 Somme summers
39 Altruistic
41 Donation
44 Abundant
46 Dispatch the dragon
49 Container for cinders
51 Plaza Hotel girl
52 Sugary
53 __ Mile Island
54 Store lane
55 John Jacob or Mary
57 Let up
58 Short distance
60 Poverty
61 Openings
64 R-V hookup



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
2/10/05

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

R	A	P	T	■	S	L	A	B	■	A	D	A	M	S
A	G	U	A	■	P	A	R	A	■	R	E	M	I	T
T	O	N	I	■	I	T	E	R	■	C	A	I	R	O
■	■	C	L	O	T	H	E	S	H	A	N	G	E	R
S	C	I	■	G	E	E	■	T	E	N	■	O	D	E
M	O	L	A	R	S	■	B	O	X	E	S	■	■	■
E	L	I	D	E	■	F	L	O	E	■	T	E	M	P
W	I	N	D	S	H	I	E	L	D	W	I	P	E	R
S	N	E	E	■	A	X	E	S	■	H	E	I	N	E
■	■	■	R	A	Z	E	D	■	R	E	S	C	U	E
A	A	H	■	M	E	D	■	B	I	I	■	U	S	N
G	R	O	U	N	D	S	K	E	E	P	E	R	■	■
O	M	A	N	I	■	F	I	N	S	■	D	E	A	L
R	O	N	D	O	■	A	L	I	T	■	G	A	L	A
A	R	S	O	N	■	R	O	N	A	■	E	N	I	D

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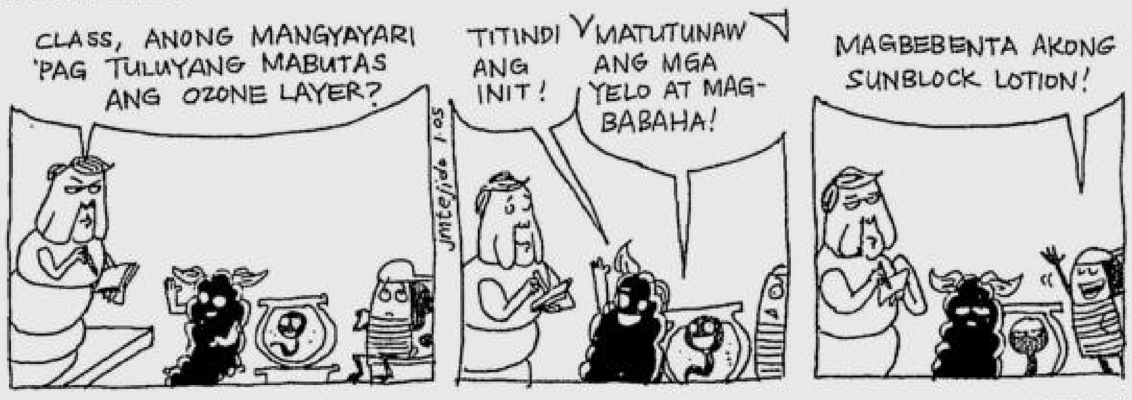
2/9/05

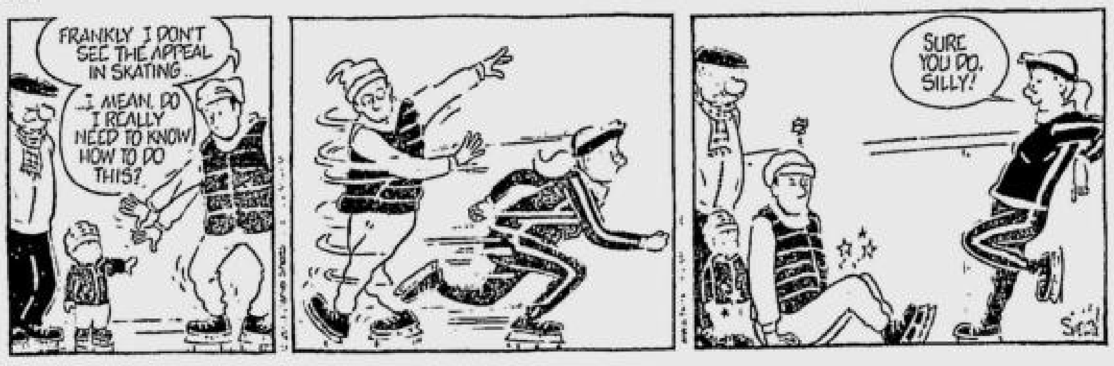
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


CLASS, ANONG MANGYAYARI 'PAG TULUYANG MABUTAS ANG OZONE LAYER?
TITINDI ANG INIT!
MATUTUNAW ANG MGA YELO AT MAG-BABAHA!
MAGBEBENTA AKONG SUNBLOCK LOTION!
jmtejido 1.05

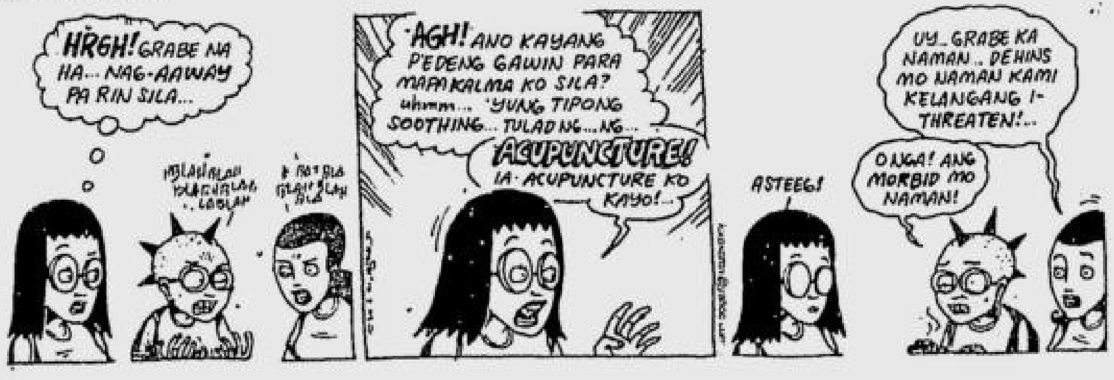
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


FRANKLY I DON'T SEE THE APPEAL IN SKATING...
...I MEAN, DO I REALLY NEED TO KNOW HOW TO DO THIS?
SURE YOU DO, SILLY!

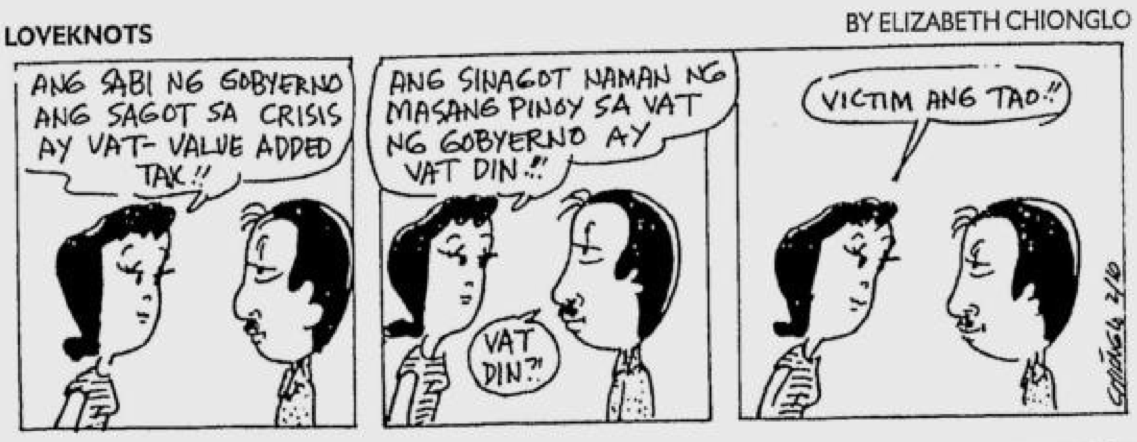
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HRGH! GRABE NA HA... NAG-AAWAY PA RIN SILA...
AGH! ANO KAYANG P'EDENG GAWIN PARA MAPAKALMA KO SILA? uhmm... 'YUNG TIPONG SOOTHING... TULAD NG... NG...
ACUPUNCTURE!! IA-ACUPUNCTURE KO KAYO!...
ASTEEG!
UY... GRABE KA NAMAN... DEHINS MO NAMAN KAMI KELANGANG I-THREATEN!...
O NGA! ANG MORBID MO NAMAN!

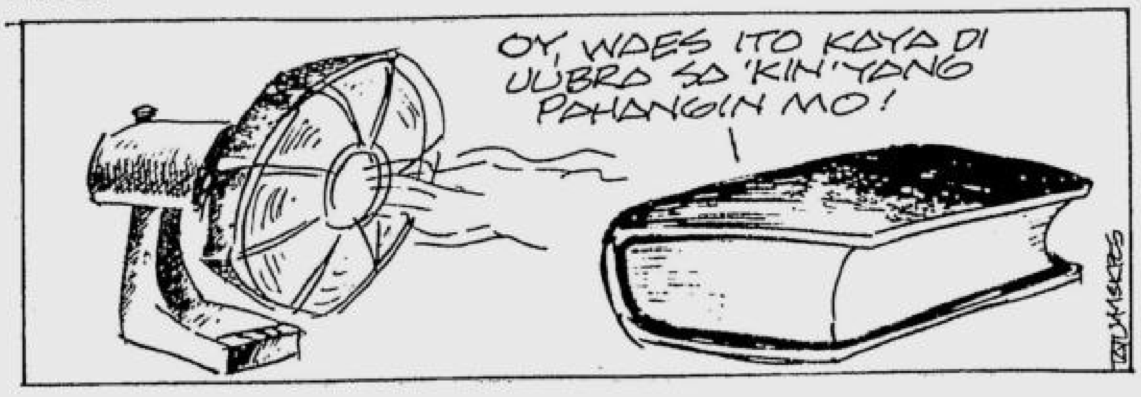
LOVEKNOTS

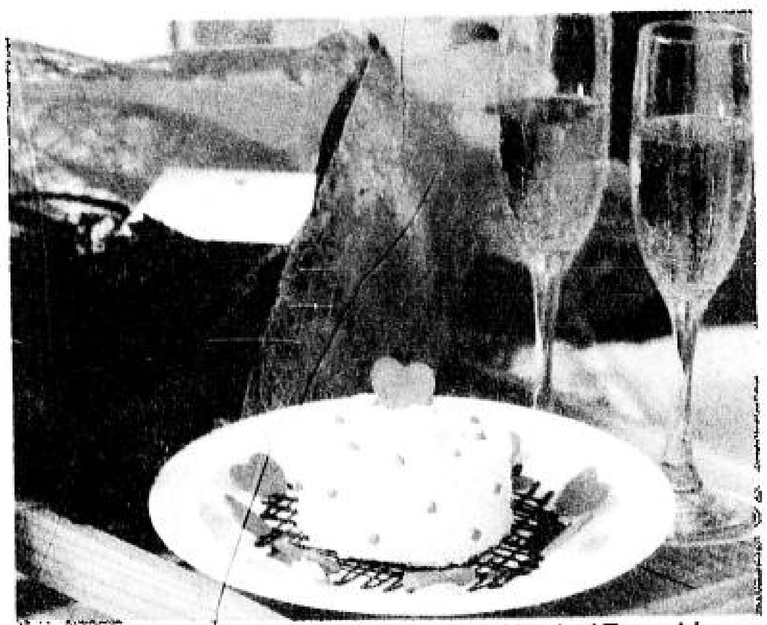
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANG SABI NG GOBYERNO ANG SAGOT SA CRISIS AY VAT- VALUE ADDED TAX!!
ANG SINAGOT NAMAN NG MASANG PINOY SA VAT NG GOBYERNO AY VAT DIN!!
VAT DIN?!
VICTIM ANG TAO!!
CHIONGLO 2/10

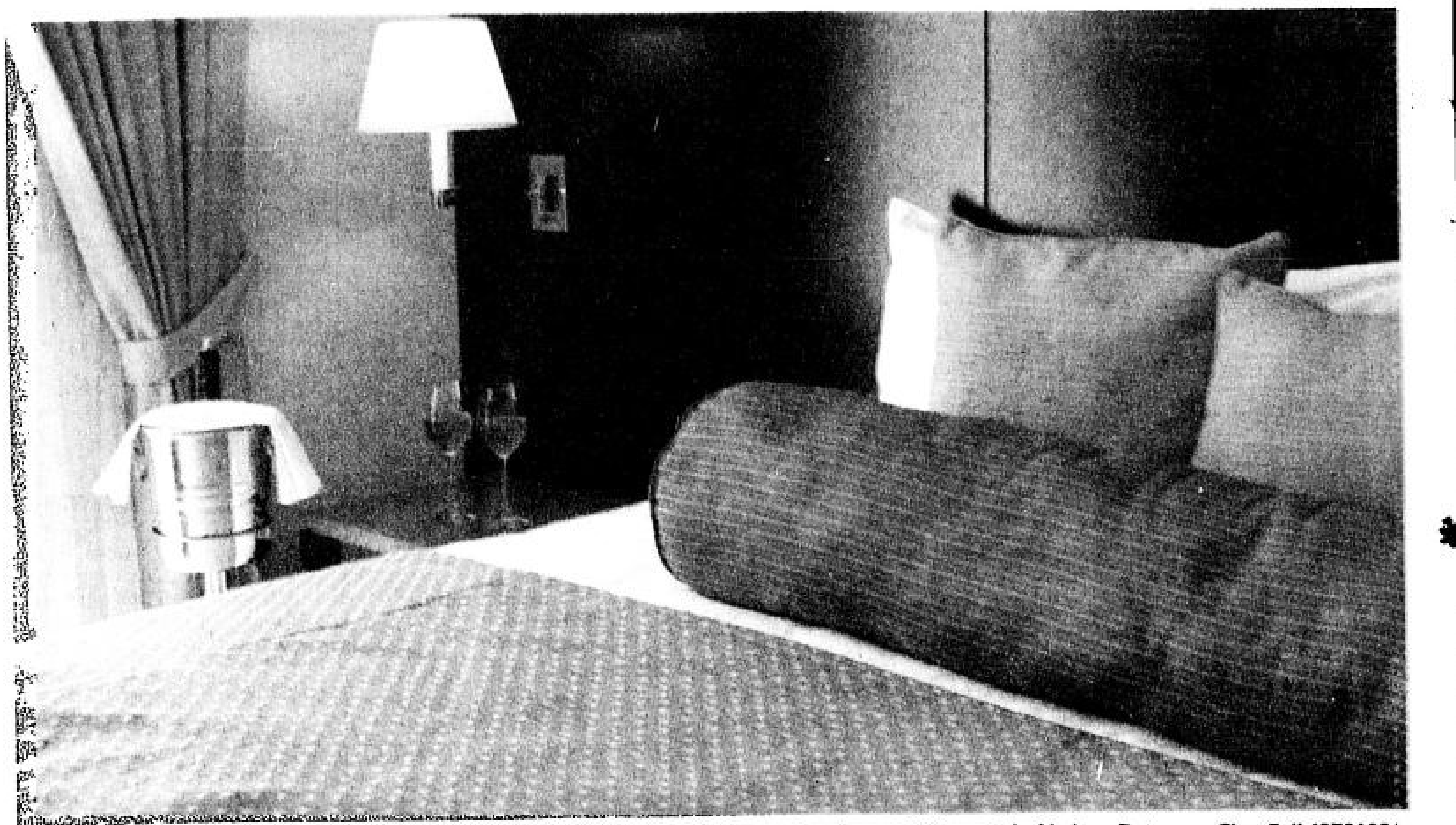
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

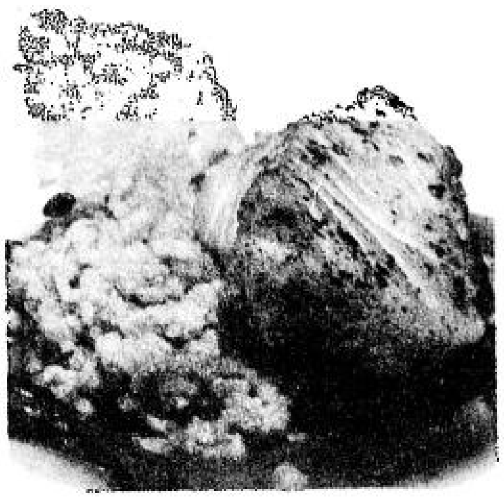

OY, WAES ITO KAYA DI UUBRA SA 'KIN 'YONG PAHANGIN MO!



THE RICHMONDE Hotel's Grill serves Grilled Herbed Tuna with Pineapple Salsa, Baked Mussels with Garlic Herb Chicken, Rack of Lamb with Sauteed Spinach and Pine Nuts, Cajun-Seared Lapu-Lapu with Mango Salsa, Stuffed Braised Beef with Olives and Roast Prime Rib on Feb. 13 and 14. Call 6387777.



HOTEL Pontefino offers Free-Style Italian cuisine on Feb. 14. The hotel is located at Pastor Village, Gulod Labac, Batangas City. Call 4372103/ 4213466/ (043) 7233466.



DISCOVERY Suites' Cafe Berrio offers Slow-Roasted Top Blade Steak with Red Wine Shallots Glaze, Mushroom Confit and Potato Gratineed, Pan-Roasted Coriander Crusted Salmon with Garlic Sauteed Spinach, Wild Rice Cake and Citrus Butter Sauce and Chocolate Chip Torte on Walnut Crust. Call 6352222.

THE HERITAGE Hotel Manila's poolside offers a six-course candlelight dinner on Feb. 13 and 14. This includes Curry-Flavored Consomme with Shark's Fin Ravioli, Royal Chrysanthemum Tea Sherbet, Roasted Marinated Medallion of Beef or Pan-fried Salmon Pickled Fennel and Balsamic Jus and Chocolate Mille-Feuille of Batangas Tablea and Lotus Seed in Coffee Mirror. At Restaurant Riviera, indulge in an international buffet spread. Call 8548888.

Celebrate romance

THE WESTIN Philippine Plaza's Poolside Barbecue presents grilled seafood, meat and vegetables on Feb. 14. The Longest Buffet combines 3 buffets for the price of one at Alfiere, China Sea and Cafe Plaza on Feb. 12-14. Call 5515555.

MANILA Diamond Hotel's Palm Court Cafe presents an all-you-can-eat seafood dinner on Feb. 13 and 14. Restaurant Le Bellevue features Butter Braised Lobster and Beef Tenderloin on Feb. 13-15. Call 5283000.

HYATT Hotel and Casino Manila's Market Cafe features lamb chops, smoked salmon, prime ribs, Caesar salad station, chocolate fountain and dessert buffet on Feb. 14. Call 2451234.

MANILA Pavilion Hotel's Rotisserie offers Smoked Salmon Love Bits, Seared Scallops Ratatouille Salad with Eggplant Vinaigrette, Cupid's Fresh Berries abd Champagne Sherbet, Imported Peppery Roast Beef Tenderloin with Prawns Thermidor, Strawberry Creme Brulee and White Chocolate Pudding on Feb. 11-15. At Patisserie, Valentine Goodies Counter is available until Feb. 15. At Pavilion Court, two set menus are featured on Feb. 13-14. Call 5261212.

MANDARIN Oriental Manila's Paseo Uno features Duck Galantine with bitter orange sauce, Blackened Beef Carpaccio with watercress-horseradish cream, Roast Rack of Lamb with pinenut crust, Pan-fried Nile Perch Fillet in lobster sauce and Chocolate fountain with fresh fruits on Feb. 14. The Tivoli and Tin Hau offer a Valentine set dinner menu on Feb. 13-15. Call 7508888.

MAKATI Shangri-La's red brings Cajun Spiced Seabass with Asparagus Risotto, Mushroom Spring Roll with Ginger Lime Sauce on Feb. 13-15. On Feb. 14, try Grilled King Prawns, Tandoori Chicken with Biryani Rice and Chocolate Fondue at Circles Event Cafe, and Grilled Chicken Breast and Scallops with Potato Truffle Gratin, Tempura Asparagus topped with Perigourdine Sauce at The Terrace. The Lobby Lounge offers champagne and strawberries dipped in Valrhona chocolate on Feb. 11-15. Call 8138888.

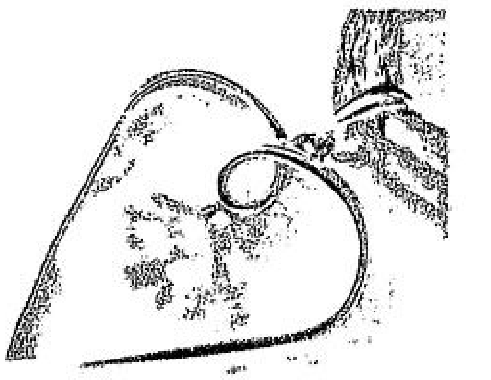
HOLIDAY Inn Resort Clark Field presents a Valentine buffet dinner at the poolside. Holiday Inn is located along Mimosa Drive, Mimosa Leisure Estate, Clark Field, Pampanga. Call 8451888/ (045) 5008000.

DAYS Hotel Philippines in Lucban, Quezon offers dinner for two, which entitles guests to a 50 percent discount on room rates. This promo is valid on Feb. 13-15. Call (042) 5402226/ 5408150.

DUSIT Hotel's Benkay restaurant offers Japanese cuisine served with a glass of wine. A surprise gift awaits lady diners on that day. Call 8673333 loc. 3343.

SULO Hotel presents Red Passion, the hotel's drink of the month for February. Available at all outlets, this beverage comes with a free cuddly stuffed toy. Call 9245051 to 71. Sulo Hotel is located along Matalino Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

SKYLINE offers a special menu of Satini pumpkin soup with pesto croutons, goat cheese and pear salad, assorted greens with balsamic dressing, seared spiced crusted seabass served with citrus vinaigrette and baby bok choy, lime sherbet with raspberry liquor and mini leaves, grilled lamb cutlets on a red wine jus, potato puree, sundried tomatoes and vegetable fritters and mango mousse cake with strawberry sauce.



ASTORIA Plaza offers a special five-course Valentine Champagne Dinner set menu at the Ambassador's Suite (35th Floor Penthouse) on Feb. 14. The set menu is good for two and comes with a complimentary bottle of champagne and creamy chocolate truffles. Lucky Astoria Plaza diners get a chance to win prizes such as a three day-two night stay at Puerto del Sol Beach Resort in Bolinao, Pangasinan, matinee tickets for two to Ballet Philippines' upcoming shows, a gift certificate for Swedish/shiatsu massage for two from Stresscape Spa and a surprise gift item from Jewelmer. The Astoria Plaza is located at 15 J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. Call 6871111.

Heart-y Valentine fare

THIS Valentine's Day, delight your loved one with dishes filled with hearts.

The San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center offers recipes for a sumptuous romantic dinner.

Visit www.mygreatfood.com.

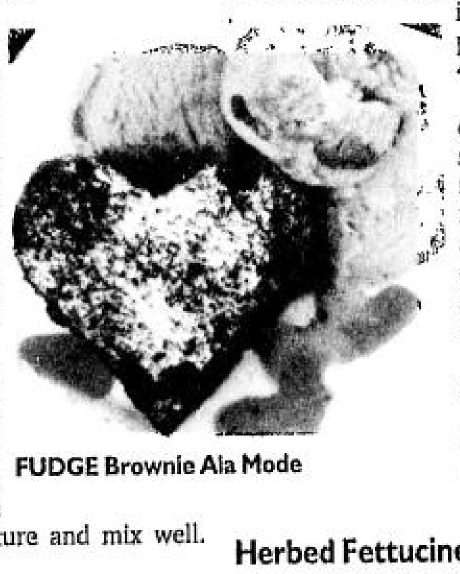
Purefoods Melt-in-your-mouth Salami Triangles

2 tbsp Magnolia Nutri-oil
¼ c onions, chopped
2 tsp garlic, chopped
4 slices Purefoods Cooked Salami
1 c fresh spinach, washed and chopped into thin strips
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tsp ground oregano
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 c grated Magnolia Cream Cheese
¾ c grated Magnolia Quickmelt Cheese
10 pcs square lumpia wrapper
2 c Magnolia Nutri-oil for deep-frying
½ c store-bought salsa

PUREFOODS Melt-in-your-mouth Salami Triangles

In a frying pan, heat the vegetable oil. Sauté the onions until translucent. Add the garlic and salami and saute for 1 minute. Add the spinach and cook for about three minutes. Season with thyme, oregano, salt and black pepper.

In a bowl, combine the grated Magnolia Cream Cheese and Magnolia Quickmelt cheese. Add the salami-spinach mixture and mix well. Let cool.



FUDGE Brownie Ala Mode

Cut the *lumpia* wrapper lengthwise into strips with 2 inch-width. Spoon some salami-cheese mixture onto bottom of the *lumpia* wrapper strip. Fold the bottom end to make a triangle. Keep folding until a triangular pouch is formed. Moisten the lumpia wrapper with some water to seal the salami triangles. Repeat until all salami-cheese filling is used up.

Deep-fry the triangles in batches until golden brown. Serve with salsa.

Makes 20 pieces.

Fudge Brownies Ala Mode

Base:
Volume
3 eggs
¾ c Baron all-purpose flour
1 ½ c sugar
¾ c Magnolia Baker's Best
¾ c cocoa powder
¼ c maple syrup
2 tbsp corn oil

Pre-heat oven to 350°F. Grease and line a 9-inch square pan. In a saucepan, melt Baker's Best, cocoa powder, maple syrup and corn oil over low heat. Let cool. In a mixing bowl, beat eggs and sugar until light in color. Fold in flour and chocolate mixture. Blend well. Pour into prepared pan. Bake for 30-40 minutes. Cool.

To serve, cut out a heart shaped brownie from the pan. Arrange on a plate and top with your choice of Magnolia ice cream variant.

Makes 4 servings.

Magnolia Chicken Lombardy With Herbed Fettucine

2 Magnolia Chicken Breast Fillet, cut into halves
1/4. c Purefoods Baron all-purpose flour
1/4 c Magnolia Gold Butter
1 c sliced fresh mushrooms
1/3 c white wine
1/3 c chicken broth
¼ tsp salt
1/8 tsp pepper
½ c grated Magnolia Quickmelt Cheese
½ c grated Parmesan cheese
¼ c chopped green onions
Herbed Fettucine:
100 g fettucine noodles, cooked according to package directions
3 tbsp Magnolia Gold Butter
2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
salt to taste

MAGNOLIA Chicken Lombardy with herbed fettucine

Procedure for chicken:

Lightly grease a medium-sized baking dish with some of the butter.

Place chicken between two sheets of heavy-duty plastic wrap, flatten to 1/8 inch thickness, using a meat mallet or rolling pin.

Dredge chicken lightly in flour. In a skillet, melt 2 tbsp of the butter. Place chicken and cook over medium heat 3-4 minutes on each side or until golden. Place chicken in the greased baking dish.

Using the same skillet, melt remaining butter. Sauté the mushrooms, stirring constantly until tender. Add wine and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer uncovered for eight minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in salt and pepper. Pour sauce evenly over chicken. Top with the Magnolia Quickmelt and Parmesan cheeses. Sprinkle green onions on top.

Bake uncovered at 350°F for 20 minutes or until the cheeses are lightly browned.

Procedure for fettucine:

In a large wok or skillet, melt the butter at medium heat. Add the cooked noodles and toss. Season with salt and sprinkle with chopped parsley.

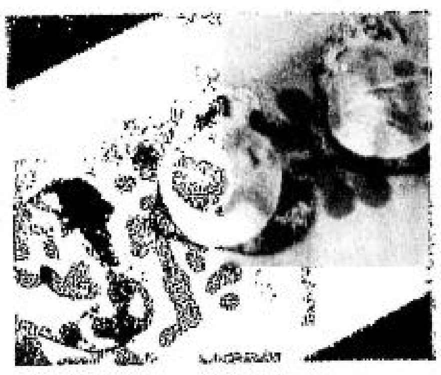
Makes 2 servings.

For a romantic touch, make a heart-shaped coleslaw.

Coleslaw:
1 ½ cups shredded cabbage
¼ cup grated carrots
3 Tbsps. chopped red onions
½ cup mayonnaise
salt to taste
pepper to taste

In a bowl, mix all ingredients and season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate.

Right before serving, mold the coleslaw using a heart-shaped cookie cutter. Place the cookie cutter on the plate and fill the cookie cutter with coleslaw. Once shaped, remove the cookie cutter.



FUDGE Brownies ala Mode

Monterey Fillet Mignon with Red Bell Pepper Sauce and Herbed Butter

MONTEREY Fillet Mignon

2 pcs Monterey Tenderloin Steak, sliced 1-inch thick
4 strips Purefoods Honey Cured Bacon
salt and pepper to taste
Roasted Bell Pepper Sauce:
4 pcs red and green bell peppers, roasted and finely chopped
½ c extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp minced garlic
1 tsp paprika powder
salt and pepper
lemon juice from 1 lemon
Herbed Butter:
1/3 c Magnolia Gold Butter, softened
1 tsp chopped fresh rosemary
½ tsp chopped fresh thyme
freshly ground black pepper

Procedure for Roasted Bell Pepper Sauce:

Combine all ingredients and blend well.

Procedure for Herbed Butter: Combine all ingredients and blend well. Place in a heart-shaped cookie cutter and keep refrigerated until ready to use.

Season beef tenderloin with salt and pepper. Wrap bacon strips around it and secure with a toothpick.

Pre-heat a steak or frying pan and pan-grill both sides over moderate heat until preferred doneness (rare, medium, etc.) is achieved,

Top with herbed butter and serve with bell pepper sauce.

Serving suggestions: Serve with baked potato, rice or buttered pasta.

Makes 2 servings.

CHEESECAKE Etc. presents Chocolate Divine Sinsation, Ghirardelli Almond Roca drink, Mango Passion, White Chocolate Pistachio, Berry Temptation, Black and White and Berry Blue until Feb. 28. Cheesecake Etc. is located at Greenbelt 1, Glorietta, Rufino cor. Leviste Sts. in Makati, Robinsons Galleria and Ermita, Ashcreek Center, Greenhills Shopping Center, Alabang Town Center, Megamall and Podium, Tomas Morato and Eastwood City Walk.

BREADTALK offers Strawberry Sweetheart, a light vanilla sponge and strawberry mousse topped with crystal jelly and fresh strawberries. Other Valentine cakes are Red Velvet and Tiramisu Moment, available until Feb. 28 at Glorietta 4, Power Plant Mall and Megamall A outlets.

DADS offers Greek favorites such as Dolmadakia (stuffed grape leaves) or pita bread with Hummus, blended chick peas with tahini paste or Tzaziki (cucumber and garlic dip), Soupe de Poisson Provencale (cubes of St. Peter's fish in a tomato puree), Moroccan chicken with olives and cilantro, or fresh seafood dishes such as Mahi-Mahi con Verduras, Psari Prito, Fruti De Mare, and Carides me Feta and Mediterranean cake, a chocolate sponge with apricots and fondant. Call 5316101/5317292.

Valentine culinary pleasures

NUVO presents its Valentine menu of Duo of smoked Duck Margret and Grilled duck breast, Lentil Salad in old balsamic, Salad mille Feuille between potato chips or Salad of Grilled Scallops and Prawns, Red cherry tomato, Baby Mozzarella and Arugulla Salad, Sicilian Fish soup with black olive bread or Double Beef Consomme with bone marrow, celery and carrot sticks, Baked Lamb loin under herbs, olive and pine kernels crust, Madeira Jus, Oven roasted Mediterranean vegetables and couscous or Roasted Seabass with Truffle Foam, Green asparagus and buttered Spaghetinni / Angel Hair Pasta or Pan-fried Lapu-Lapu fillet with mussel Champagne sabayon, Grilled scallop wrapped in Parma Ham, Buttered Spinach and Potato Cubes and La Freccia D' Amore Di Cupido/Kiss of an Angel.

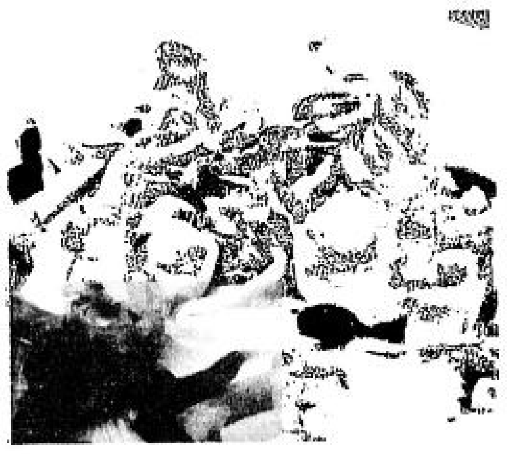
DINING OUT

BIZU Patiserrie and Bistro at Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center, Makati, has a promo on Feb.11-14, 7 p.m. Every order of 2 main set entrees and dessert with a minimum P1,000 single receipt entitles couples to have a free photo taken. The most romantic photo for each night will win the couple accommodations for 3 days and 2 nights at Crystal Paradise Resort in Palawan. Bizu also offers the Jewelled Truffle Box Collection made with Vairhona chocolate from France, pistachio and walnuts. Bizu Patisserie cafés are located at the 3/F of Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati and the G/F of Corte Delas Palmas of Alabang Town Center. Call 757BIZU/ 7574749.

ILUSTRADO Garden features a Valentine menu of Sauteed Portobello Mushrooms and Fresh Asparagus with Parma Ham and Parmesan Cheese Shavings, Wild Mushrooms Consomme with Grilled Beef, Herb Crusted Lamb Leg and Ribs, Slow Roasted Beef Tenderloin, Baked King Prawns with Pasta Putanesca and Crepe Suzette with Strawberry Flambe. Ilustrado is located along Gen. Luna Street, Intramuros. Call 5272345/3674 and 75.

KIMPURA offers a special set menu for the whole month of February. Savor salmon sashimi, agedashi dofu, mixed tempura of shrimp and fish, sukiyaki steak, mixed fried rice, miso soup and gelatin ala mode and one round of iced lemon tea. Kimpura is at 2/L, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati (tels. 8932307/ 8924456) and Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan (7218816/8869).

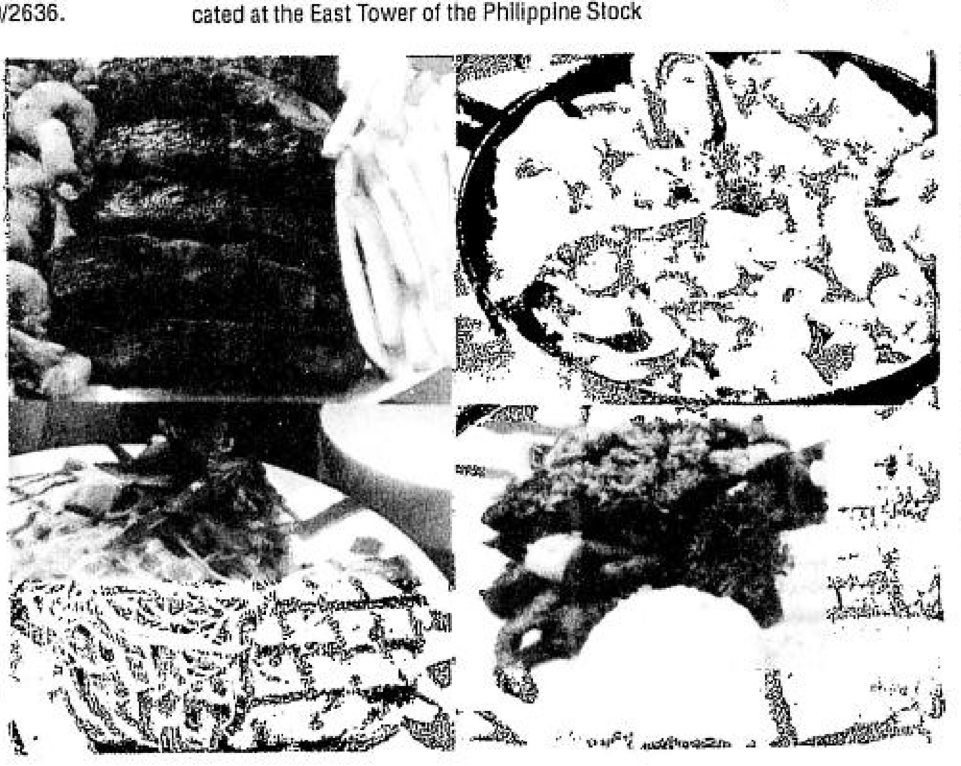
PEKING Garden's Chinese New Year set menu includes four kinds of appetizer, shark's fin with assorted seafood in papaya soup, Peking duck, golden prawns with salted eggs, braised dried oysters with sea moss and lettuce, deep-fried lapu-lapu with Sichuan vinegar sauce, lotus-wrapped preserved Chinese sausage rice topped with garlic crabs, steamed supreme soup and pork dumplings and chilled mango shake with sago. Call 8179066/9067. Peking Garden is at the 2/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City.



ITALIANNI'S Restaurant offers Grilled Prawns Florenza and Grilled NY Striploin with Gorgonzola Butter, Spinach and Artichoke Formaggio, Stuffed Mushrooms, Mussels Lombardi and Fried Calamari. Italianni's is located at Eastwood Avenue in Libis; Unit 1, CKB Center, Sct. Rallos cor. Tomas Morato; Glorietta 4; Greenbelt 2; Alabang Town Center; Greenhills; and SM City Bicutan.

JADE Garden presents two special set menus. Set menu 1 consists of barbecued suckling pig with assorted meat, shark's fin soup with crabmeat, steamed lapu-lapu, sauteed fresh scallops with conpoy and broccoli, fried pigeons marinated in wine, steamed crabs with minced garlic, braised dried oysters and bamboo-pith, lobster superior sauce with noodles and hot sweetened almond puree with dumplings and fresh fruit platter. Set menu 2 also carries an array of "lucky" dishes. Jade Garden is at Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati City, with tel. 8922319/2636.

BURGOO presents Grilled Chicken Americana with Angel Hair Pasta, Seafood Linguini, Grilled Steak a la Pobre, Linguini with Clams, Grilled Pork Chops, Oklahoma Style Grilled Baby Back Ribs, Baked Salmon, Seafood Aglio Olio, Shrimp and Ribs and Seafood Jambalaya. Just order any two of the entrees and get a free dessert of your choice on Feb. 14. Burgoo is located at Tomas Morato, QC; Power Plant Mall, Makati; The Podium, Ortigas Center; The Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan; Gateway Mall, Araneta Center. Call 9277424/ 8981815/ 6875254/ 7264663/ 9127234.



LUK YUEN offers special tikoy which comes in reusable microwaveble plastic box at P118 /box. Diners may also taste it ala carte at P45 /order of 3 pieces. Visit Luk Yuen at Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan; SM Megamall Basement Bldg. B; Glorietta 2 , Ayala Center ,Makati; Cash & Carry, Makati; Paseo de Magallanes, Makati; and Alabang Town Center.

CHINESE Monk offers Lemon Chicken, Mushu Pork, Kung Pao Chicken, Sweet and Sour Pork, Braised Duck with Three Mushrooms, Oriental Spareribs, Beef Brisket, Fish Tofu Hotpot, Beef with Broccoli and Szechuan Prawns. As a Valentine treat, get free two orders of dimsum when you order any two of these dishes. Chinese Monk is located at the ground level, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati. Call 8974129.

SEGAFREDO Espresso Bar at Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center, Makati, celebrates Feast of the Hearts on Feb.11-14. Each day, lucky guests (single, couple or group) will get a chance to win gift packs for a minimum P1,500 single receipt. Call 7574058.

DOME Café branches at the Podium, Shangri-La Mall and Solid Mills Building in Makati offers a complimentary Valentine's Day dessert. Couples who avail of a P500 worth of food or coffee purchase exclusive of service charge, during lunch or dinner, get heart-shaped brownies topped with strawberry coulis and served with vanilla ice cream.

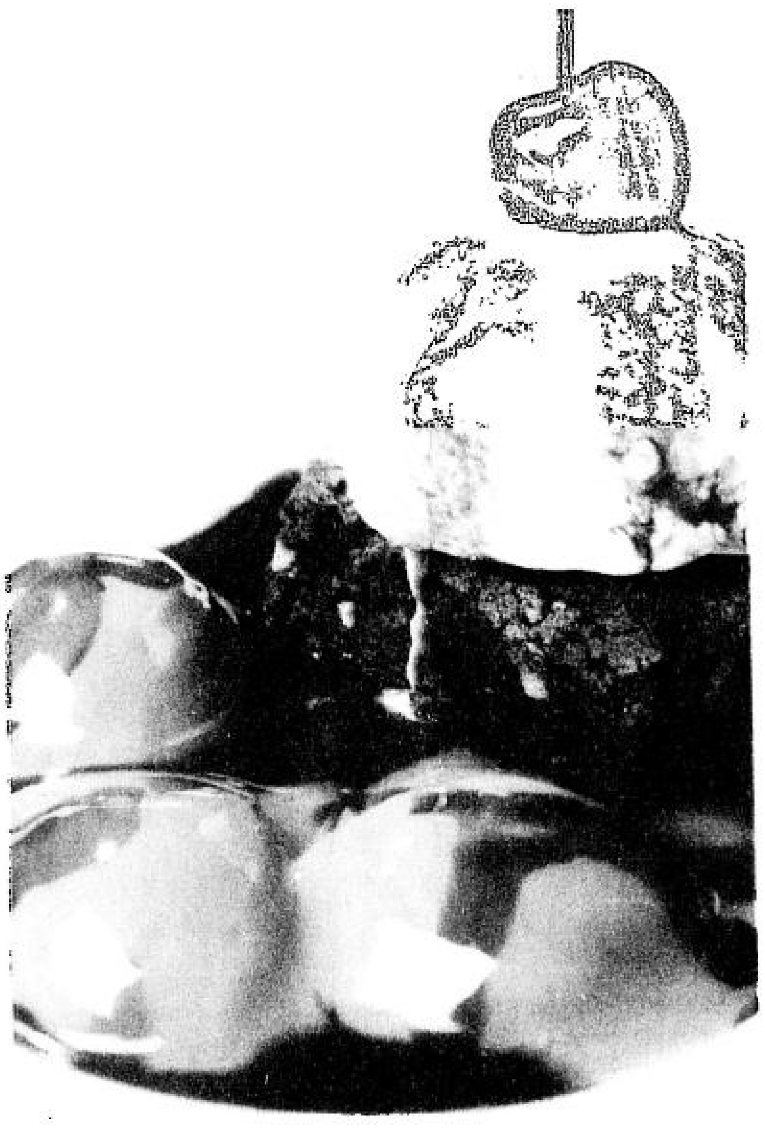
THE PLAZA'S Joe's offers Fillet Mignon with Buttered Vegetable and Roasted Marble Potatoes, Grilled Seabass with Tomato Basil Salsa, Grilled Rib-Eye Steak with Bearnaise Sauce and Pan-Seared Creme Dory with Fresh Tomato Salsa and Potato Risotto. The Plaza at The Penthouse is located at the East Tower of the Philippine Stock Exchange Center in Ortigas. Call 6870991/ 6871262/ 6319653.

BLUE BACON and Green Eggs Restaurant offers a Valentine menu of soup, salad, main course, red wine and dessert. The restaurant is located at 27 Lantana cor. Boston St., Cubao, QC. Call 7268054/ 7212717.

TIA Maria's features Chicken Fajitas, Nachos Grandes, Quesadillas, Flautas, Mexican Paella, Gambas al Ajillo, Chicken Mozzarella Fajitas and BBQ ala Tia's. The restaurant is located in Remedios, Tomas Morato, Megamall, Baguio and Cantina Katipunan.

DELIFRANCE offers Garlic Pesto Pasta served with Fortant de France red or white wine and Chocolate Cream Puffs and Chocolate Kiss.

PANCAKE House presents a Valentine promo on Feb. 13 and 14. Diners who come for lunch and dinner, with a minimum purchase of P300 will receive one chocolate double heart with angel or one chocolate heart brownies.



MINGOY'S Restaurante will give a free Brownie a la Mode con Toffee to couples who order a minimum of P750 worth of meals on Feb. 14. This promo is available the restaurant's outlets in Casa Susana Arcade, Alabang and The Fort Strip, Taguig.

Sweet treats to celebrate love

PASTRY Passion's Triple Decadence

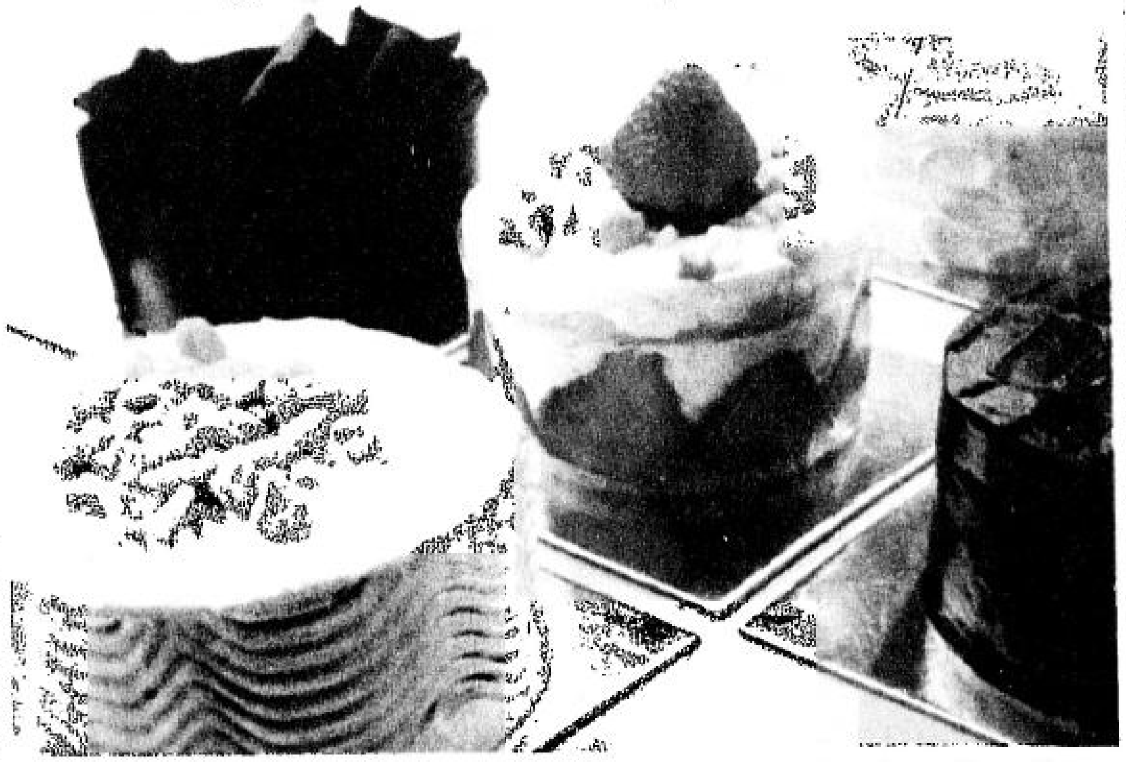
PASTRY Passion has added new items to its list of quality cake and pastry products for the season of love.

The new items include the Lava Cake, White Chocolate Crème Brulee, Mocha Locca, and Triple Decadence. They are suitable as gifts for loved ones, or as sweet treats to be enjoyed during romantic outings.

For those who feel that old favorites express the spirit of the season best, Pastry Passion offers old favorites like the Concorde, Decadence, Rum Cake, Sans Rival, Tiramisu, Oreo Cheesecake, Chocolate Mousse, Mango Mousse.

Customers will also get their favorite chili dog and clubhouse sandwiches and pasta with panini bread.

Pastry Passion at 48 West Avenue, Quezon City, is owned by Shirley Santos and managed by her sister, Sheryl Santos. Call 4150108 or 3732936.



ALL-TIME favorites: Chocolate Mousse, Sans Rival, Strawberry Shortcake, Decadence, Mango Mousse

ENTERTAINMENT Metro

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Final Four get taste of pro show biz life

By Carmela Teresa Almonte

AS THE second season of "StarStruck," GMA 7's reality-based talent search nears the grand finals on Feb. 20 at the Araneta Coliseum, the Final Four get a taste of the show biz life.

CJ Muere, LJ Reyes, Mike Tan and Ryza Cenon were each assigned a "manager" on last Friday's live telecast.

CJ was assigned to Leo Dominguez, LJ to Manny Valera, and Mike to Joy Cancio. Ryza was assigned to Jun Lalin, who took over Lolit's duties.

One week

The managers were given a week, or until Feb. 10, to book their respective talents for pictorials, tapings, TV appearances—all part and parcel of a hectic show biz life.

They planned to have their charges sign up for courses, such as voice lessons for both LJ and Ryza.

"Ryza told Manay Lolit and me that she wasn't very good in singing," Lalin said.

LJ, who was insecure about her singing, was signed up by Valera for voice lessons because "a star should be multi-talented."

Cancio, who manages Sexbomb Dancers, said she wanted Mike to experience "*kung ano yung pinasok niya. Hindi madali maging artista* (what it's like to be in this business. It's not easy to be an actor)."

Valera said he wanted to test LJ's perseverance. "*May pagka-slave driver ako, lalo na sa mga baguhan* (I tend to be a slave driver especially with newbies)."

Asked about their respective talents' chances of winning the competition, the managers were all praises.

"*Madali siyang ibenta* (It's easy to market her)," Lalin said of Ryza, granddaughter of radio broadcaster Joe Taruc. "*Hindi kailangang ipilit para i-*cast (You don't have to force people to give her a role)."

"She listens," he added.

He and Solis are training the soft-spoken Ryza to project her voice. "Sometimes you can't hear her. But we're very positive she's a winner," Lalin said.

"*Hindi naman ako kukuha ng hindi panalo* (I wouldn't get a loser)," Dominguez said, describing CJ as "very determined, listens to instructions, and comes to work early. He has a positive outlook."

Dominguez, who manages sexy actor Emilio Garcia and singer-comedian Ogie Alcasid, said CJ "has the makings of a wholesome and dramatic actor."

"Dream *niya mapasok sa* telenovela. He wants to excel in drama (His dream is to join a telenovela)," he said.

Valera narrated that during the taping of "Joyride," LJ had a scene where she was supposed to be slapped by actress Isay Alvarez.

LJ nailed it in one take.

A winner

"*Direk* Mac (Alejandre) told me, 'Manny, you have a winner,'" he said. "*Pwedeng maging bida dahil pwedeng kawawa* (She could play a heroine because she looks pitiful)."

When LJ performed at the Metro Bar in West Avenue, Quezon City, Valera said she was confident on stage and had "rapport with the audience."

Cancio said that aside from being warm and friendly, Mike had discipline and was never late.

"For me he's a winner. *Dahil kung late 'to, sasabihin ko, 'Alam mo, wala kang pag-asa* (If he had come late, I would tell him: You're hopeless).'"

Mike said Cancio helped him acquire a "proper" show biz attitude.

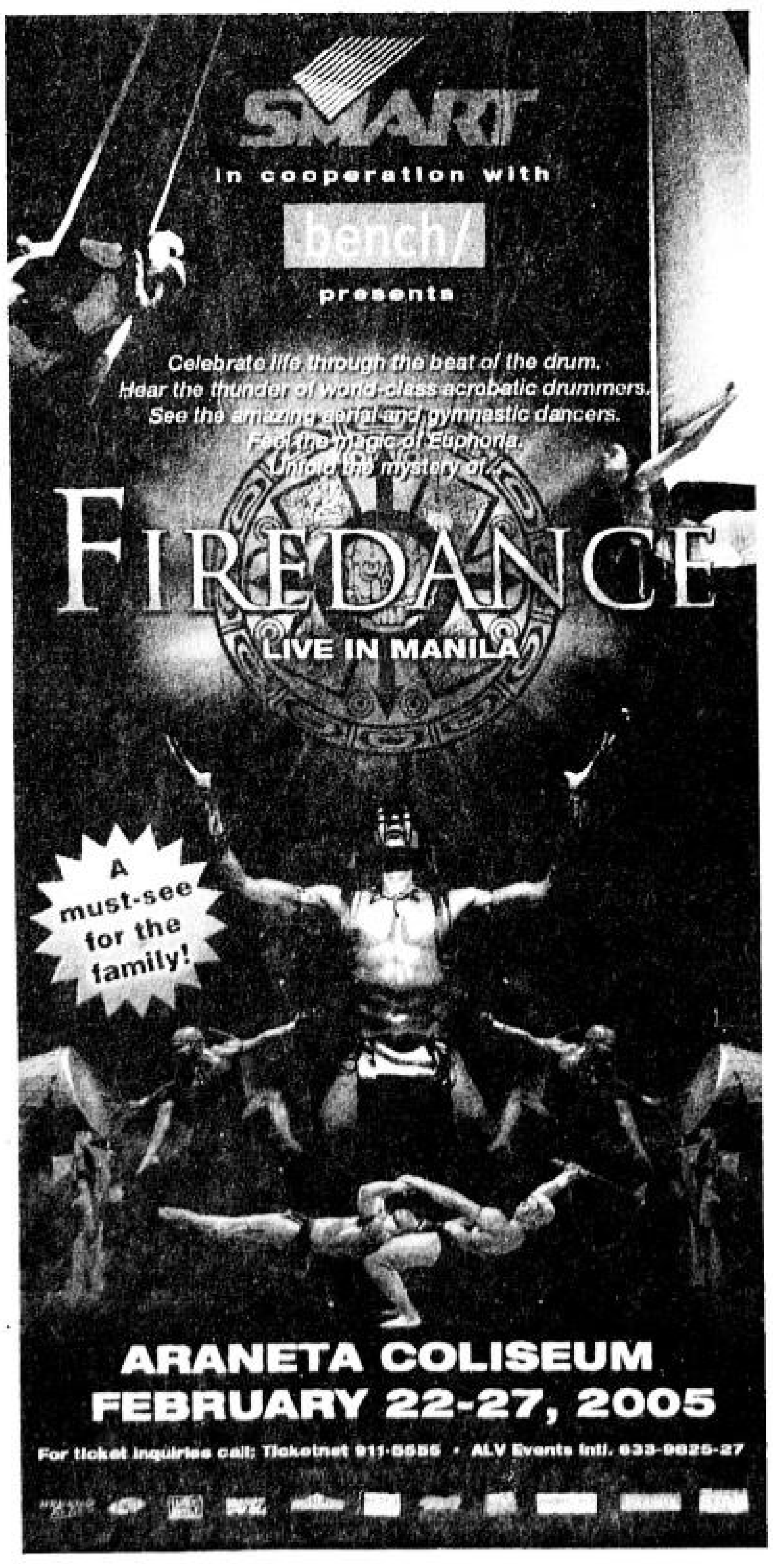
FINAL/2

SHE SAID **SHE SAID**

Oscar winner Hilary Swank, lead star of "Million Dollar Baby," on her being nominated a second time for the Academy Awards: "I'm beside myself."

The two stars attended the pre-Oscar lunch on Monday. *Story on page 2*

Actress Annette Bening, lead star of "Being Julia," on being pitted against Swank once more: "It is just a funny coincidence. I think she is a great actress."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When competition was the last thing on nominees' minds

BEVERLY HILLS, California—More than 100 nominees for this year's Oscars gathered for a jubilant but relaxed lunch Monday ahead of the frenetic last stretch of the race that could change their lives forever.

At least 115 nominees vying for cinema's top honors, including 16 of the 19 acting hopefuls, attended the annual Oscar nominees' luncheon at a Beverly Hills hotel where competition was the last thing on the guests' minds.

VIRGINIA MADSEN

The annual gala, held less than three weeks before the 77th annual Academy Awards, is an informal get-together for the nominees in 24 categories, from which no one goes home a loser.

"I could not be happier," British star Kate Winslet, nominated as Best Actress for her role as the volatile lover in "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," told reporters before the three-course banquet. "It doesn't feel competitive. You are all in a bubble together—being nominated is really amazing."

While nominees traditionally insist that it is honor enough to receive an Oscar nod, only around one in five will walk off with an Academy Award when they are handed out in Hollywood on Feb. 27.

But they all felt like winners on Monday.

Among those who attended were Best Actor hopefuls Leonardo DiCaprio ("The Aviator"), Clint Eastwood ("Million Dollar Baby"), Jamie Foxx, ("Ray") and Don Cheadle ("Hotel Rwanda").

Best Actress nominees Annette Bening ("Being Julia"), Hilary Swank ("Million Dollar Baby"), and Colombia's Catalina Sandino Moreno also turned out, as did Best Supporting Actress hopefuls Cate Blanchett ("The Aviator"), Virginia Madsen ("Sideways"), and Laura Linney ("Kinsey").

First-time Oscar nominee Madsen conceded that her nod had already turned her life around.

"It's changed like night and day," she said. "That's new for my career. There's more names that I recognize on scripts now. It's nice that I'm not calling my agent saying, 'You've got to get something for me.' Now he's like, 'Why haven't you called me back? I sent you four scripts.'" *AFP*

JAMIE FOXX (right) with Director Michael Mann, who directed "Collateral," where Foxx also stars in a supporting role

READY, GET SET ... Ryza, Mike, LJ and CJ

Final Four get taste of pro show biz life

From page A1

Bottom line, all four managers agreed that the Final Four should focus on their careers.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. *Napakaikli ng panahon* (Time is fleeting)," Valera said.

Cancio stressed: "*Kahit magka*-girlfriend OK *lang, kasi gagaling pag*-inspired (It's OK to have a girlfriend because you become better when you're inspired)."

Her only reservation is when a girlfriend controls or meddles in the career of her *alaga* (ward).

Dominguez, however, is dead set against his talent getting into a relationship.

"*Bawal* (I won't allow it)," he said. "Career *muna para siguradong walang hadlang o sagabal* (It's career first so there are no obstructions)."

With their busy schedules, the Final Four found out for themselves just how difficult and satisfying it is to be in show biz.

Ryza finished taping for the show "3R (Respect, Relax, Respond)" at 1 a.m., slept for an hour before rushing off for location for the morning show "Unang Hirit."

DID YOU KNOW...

COUSINS **Ryan, AJ,** and **Geoff Eigenmann** were seen hanging out last Saturday at the Saguijo Café and Lounge in San Antonio Village in Makati, where the Loquy band played. With them was **Denise Laurel** of GMA-7's new show "Leya."

Retired, delusional stuntman makes poor witness against Blake

LOS ANGELES—A key prosecution witness who was expected to say that Robert Blake solicited the murder of his wife testified Monday that the actor never directly asked him to murder Bonny Lee Bakley.

Gary McLarty, a retired stunt man, also acknowledged he was a heavy user of cocaine and had experienced paranoid delusions that people were tunneling under his house, that he was being chased by police and was being watched by satellites.

He said the actor 'mentioned' $10,000 but not exactly as a fee for murder

Under prosecution questioning, McLarty said Blake complained to him about his wife, showed him where she lived at his home, and pointed out a place where "someone could go up the stairs at night and pop her."

Asked by the prosecutor if Blake led him to believe he wanted him to commit the crime, McLarty said, "It was obvious." But at another point McLarty said, "I insinuated it."

At a preliminary hearing, McLarty had testified Blake solicited the killing of his wife.

Defense attorney M. Gerald Schwartzbach pressed McLarty on Monday about what Blake had really said.

"Mr. Blake never actually said he wanted you to do something to Bonny Bakley at that time?" asked Schwartzbach.

"Yes, that's true," McLarty said.

Bakley, 44, was shot May 4, 2001, in Blake's car near a restaurant where the couple dined. The 71-year-old former "Baretta" TV star is charged with murder, soliciting others to commit a murder and lying in wait in the 2001 shooting death of Bakley, the woman he married after learning he had fathered her baby.

Blake claims he found her bleeding after leaving her alone to return to the restaurant to retrieve a handgun he carried for protection.

McLarty testified that during their meeting Blake mentioned $10,000 but there was no discussion of whether that was a fee for murder.

Two or three days later, he said, Blake called him and "he asked me what I thought. I said I didn't want to have anything to do with it. He asked why and I said, 'Just your notoriety.'"

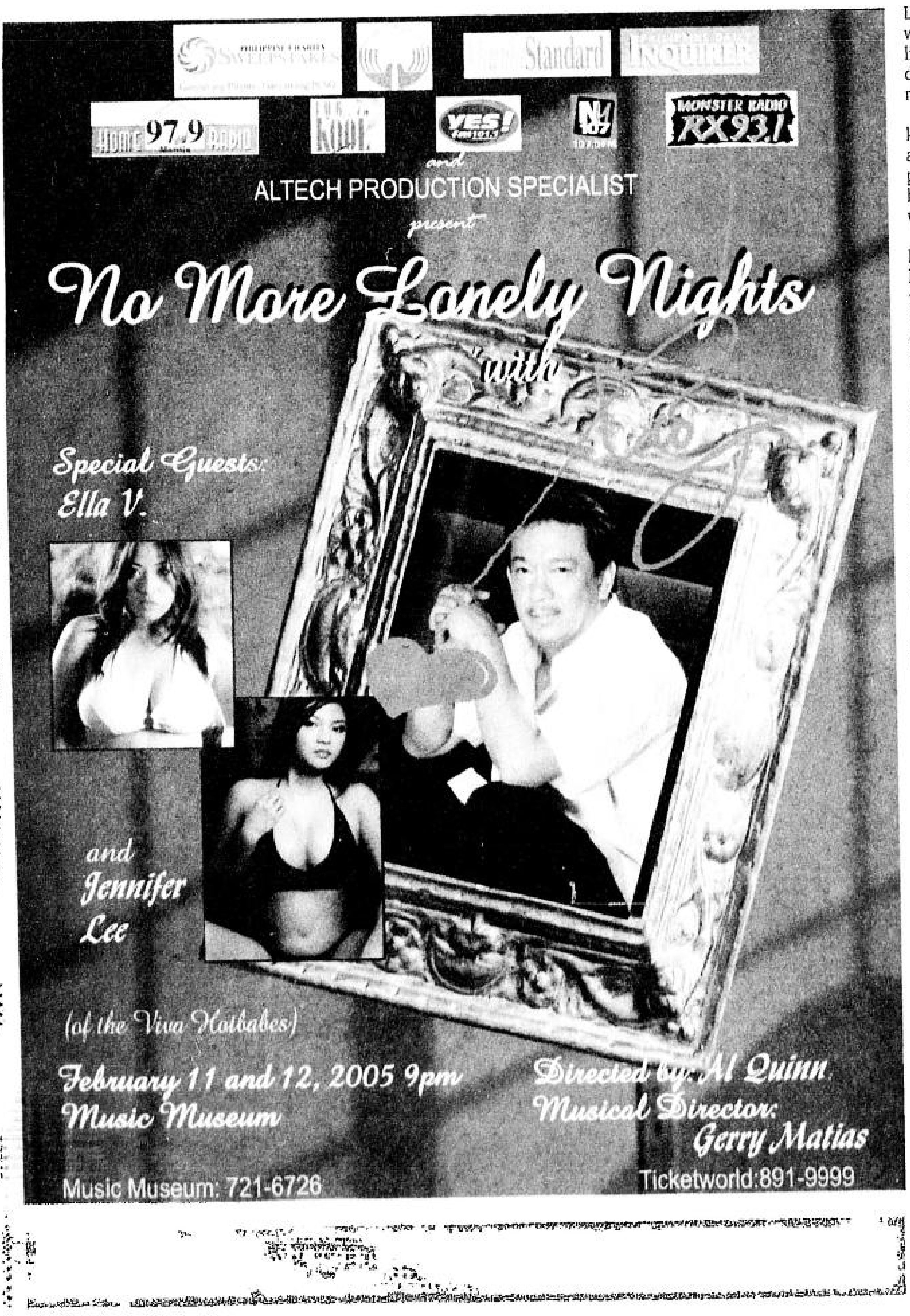
Schwartzbach suggested that when Blake contacted McLarty he was worried because someone had been "bothering" Bakley and Blake was seeking protection.

McLarty said that the subject of protection was one of the reasons he met with Blake, along with his belief that he might be getting a stunt role "doubling him" in a new movie.

Under questioning, McLarty acknowledged that he had been a heavy cocaine user since the 1980s, but said he decided to give it up "because of this trial."

The witness also acknowledged that years ago he killed someone at his home but was not charged because it was considered self defense, and that he had a reputation as "a tough guy." *AP*

DENZEL WASHINGTON (right) and Director Spike Lee arrive at the screening in New York of a documentary commemorating the 40th death anniversary of Malcolm X. Washington played the lead role in Lee's 1992 movie about the black rights activist. Also present were Malcolm X's daughter Ilyasah Shabazz and actor Wesley Snipes.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Travelling . . .

From page 4

eyes full of life. There is no trace at all that she is a breast cancer survivor.

"A hug from a child is better than any citation, trophy or picture with some leader," she said, gently.

Even so, some of their work have not gone unnoticed.

"Daughter," their animation film on incest, won the Annecy Festival in Haute-Savoie, Southeast France middle of last year as Best Educational Film, and received a special award from the United Nations Children Educational Fund.

A song they composed, "Triumph of Death," has been performed by the Royal Danish Company, and has gone platinum six times over.

The Koppels said they have produced more than 20 CDs, performed before large audiences, like a crowd of 200,000 in Scandinavia some 10 years ago, and at the Newport Festival in New York.

Thomas and Annisette are set to write the music for "Good Boy," an SFI animation film that tackles pedophilia. They left the country on Saturday for Scandinavia, from where they will return to California to produce a new album before going back on the road.

ANNISETTE and Thomas Koppel

JAMIE WILSON

JENNY JAMORA

Desire, not love in 'Blue Room'

SHOW TIME

PHILIPPINE theater's New Voice Company is celebrating Valentine with a twist. Instead of love songs, there will be scenes. Instead of love, there will be projection and desire.

Top actors Jamie Wilson and Jenny Jamora star in the production of "The Blue Room," a play in 10 intimate acts. The play sets scenes of love and betrayal in the present day, with the cast of two playing a succession of characters whose sexual lives entangle like a daisy chain.

Sex in this age is a strong driving force, a commodity, a need. The play showcases the amoral and ruthless erotic drive in action, turning sexual disappointment into the realization that what one is in love with is often part illusion.

Few can perform the roles in this play with versatility, sensitivity and power. And only New Voice dares offer such an untraditional Valentine treat.

"The Blue Room" runs at the Republic of Malate from Feb. 25 to March 4, with Friday and Saturday evening shows at 9 p.m., and Saturday matinees at 4 p.m.

For tickets, call 896-6695, 896-5497, or 899-0630; e-mail nvc@pacific.net.ph; or visit www.newvoicecompany.com.

Tickets are also available at Ticketworld outlets. Call 891-9999.

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DREAMBOY GP 12:20,2:45,5:10,7:35,10:00
ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 R13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10
FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX GP 12:40,3:00,5:30,8:00,10:30

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3 DREAMBOY 10:35, 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:05 GP
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN 11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:00 GP

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3 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA MTRCB (PG - 13) 1
4 SHALL WE DANCE MTRCB (GP) 12:25, 2:50, 5:15, 7:40, 10:05 LMP
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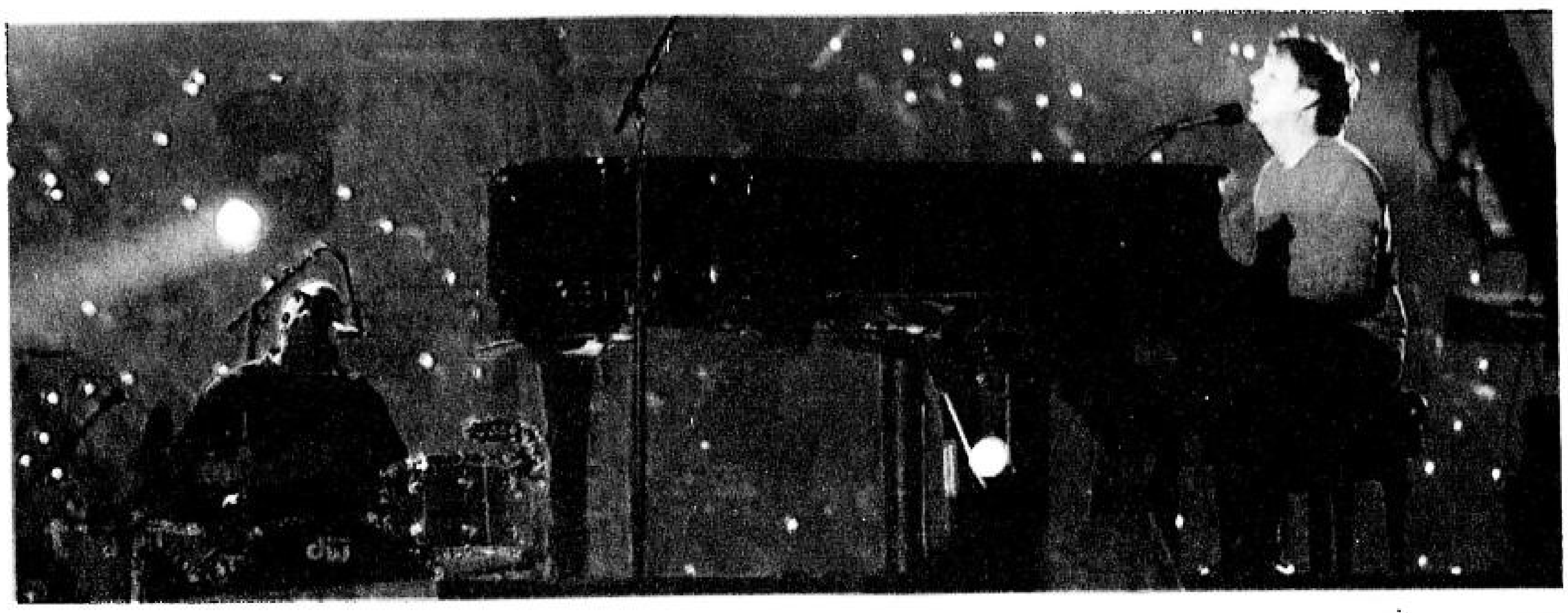

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Traveling minstrels in Mindoro

By Madonna T. Virola
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO GALERA, Oriental Mindoro—Danish couple Thomas and Annisette Koppel, former members of the 1960s folk-rock band Savage Rose, were in the country recently to bring music to the children of Iraya Mangyans.

The Koppels, based in California, came to the Philippines as volunteer workers for the Stairway Foundation Inc. (SFI), a non-governmental organization that helps abused children.

They said they were very happy to help the kids "find their souls and respect themselves, others and nature."

The Filipino children they met, the couple noted, "have huge problems on their shoulders."

In an exclusive interview with the INQUIRER at the SFI office here, Thomas started playing his accordion and street children sang with him, clapping and jumping.

"We just followed them around and music was created," said Thomas, 60. He and his wife were here from Jan. 29 to Feb. 5, precisely to sing with the street children. "We write songs best when we are with kids," Thomas said.

It was the couple's first time in Southeast Asia, although they have traveled around the world.

They found the Iraya Mangyans "so lovely and extremely friendly." For such a modest people, Thomas said, "they have such a big soul. They're so mindful of the environment. There is no reason to be poor in such a beautiful country."

The Koppels have previously performed for and played with the indigenous Eskimos in Alaska. "The world is one big family," said Annisette.

Savage Rose

Thomas and Annisette met in the mid '60s. He invited her to join his band, Savage Rose.

"It was so named because, while we were rebellious, we liked the beauty of the rose," he explained.

"From the start, we loved singing with the people everywhere we went. Our story was everyone's story. Our themes—love, beauty—are timeless," said Annissette.

Now they are traveling minstrels. Thomas accompanies Annissette on several instruments, including piano, accordion, and flute.

They don't miss the heady years of their success as teenagers.

"In 1969, agents and recording companies were after us," recounted Thomas. "But we realized they wanted something different from us, something we were not prepared to give. We would rather be musicians for the people."

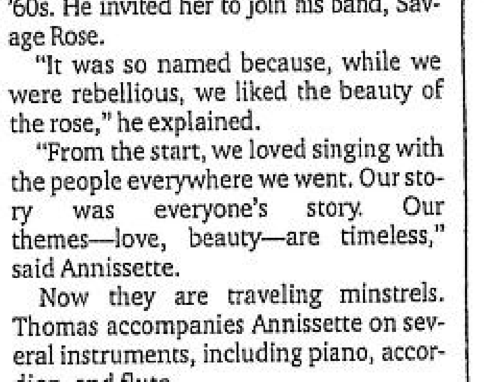
They refused to sing for American soldiers during the war in Vietnam.

"We were under a recording contract at the time, and we knew it would be terminated if we refused to go," Thomas said. "A photo session was set with President Lyndon Johnson. But we just could not support the war. In the end we did what we felt was right."

But in Lebanon they went, to sing to the war-weary people. "We performed while bullets whizzed by our heads," said Annisette. "Bombs were falling neraby. And then a child with shining eyes gave us flower. I thought, 'This is life.'"

Annissette, 56, wears her long hair loosely hung around her shoulders, her

TRAVELLING/3


COSMOPOLITAN

FUN DUDE
Actor Kevin Bacon accepts Cosmopolitan magazine's Fun Fearless Male Award on Monday in New York. Among the others honored were Taye Diggs, Simon Cowell and Sean "P.Diddy" Combs.